

# EASY ON THE EAR

© Stuart May 2008

## Briefing Questionnaire

To help clarify your needs and a brief for the project, please take some time to consider these questions. The answers you give will help me understand your business and what's involved in writing your copy. If you answer these questions before you contact me, you'll be well prepared to brief me. I'll also need to know your name and position, the name and address of your business, your website address (if you have one), and your telephone number and e-mail. If you need more space, please use another piece of paper.

- 1) What do you want writing? e.g. website, press release, brochure, flyer, newsletter, etc.
- 2) What does your business do? What service or product do you offer? Please be specific.
- 3) What do you want the copy to achieve? What are its objectives? How will the piece be used ? And where does it fit into your sales cycle? e.g. to generate sales and enquiries, to qualify potential customers, educate new prospects, an information package in response to enquiries, etc.
- 4) What's the background to this project? For example, how do you currently market your service or product? Why do you want this copy written now? How has your business developed? What are your short and long-term goals? And how does this project fit in with these goals?
- 5) What sort of image and tone of voice do you want the copy to convey? e.g. firm and confident, professional, helpful and supportive, light-hearted and quirky, warm and friendly, direct sales pitch, cheap and cheerful, etc.
- 6) Do you want me to come up with any particular conceptual/creative ideas? e.g. business name, strapline, or slogan, etc.
- 7) How much writing do you want? What's the estimated amount of words, pages, or available space?
- 8) What's your budget for this project?
- 9) When do you need this copy completed? What's the deadline?
- 10) Who is your target reader? Please provide a specific profile of your typical target customer. If you've more than one type of target customer, please provide a profile for each. Include approximate age, geographical location, income, marital status, industry and occupation, education, politics, religious or ethnic background, etc, as appropriate.

- 11) What excites and motivates your target customers? What are their needs, desires, and concerns? When considering a service or product like yours, what issues and things are important to these people? What questions are frequently asked about your service or product (FAQs) ?
  
- 12) If the copy's to appear on the internet, what keywords and phrases do your target customers use to find your service or product?
  
- 13) What's the unique selling point (USP) of your service or product? If there's more than one, please list them all. What sets it apart and makes it unique? What does your service or product do better than your competition?
  
- 14) What's the main selling point for your service or product? What's the most important promise or benefit your service or product has to offer?
  
- 15) What are the other selling points of your service or product? Please list all the benefits and features in order of importance. If you're providing me with supporting literature, you needn't take too long on this. I'll dig them out myself.
  
- 16) Do you have a particular philosophy or vision that drives your business? If so, please describe it.
  
- 17) Who are your main competitors and where do you rank in the industry? Please provide any relevant website addresses.
  
- 18) What relevant background material can you supply to help me write effective copy? Here's a list of the sort of things I'll need:
  - Existing marketing literature, including websites and any other internet marketing copy.
  - Names and numbers of any staff, customers, or both to contact for further information.
  - Market research.
  - Business and marketing plans.
  - Evidence to support your claims and overcome your readers' scepticism, including letters, endorsements, and testimonials from customers, case studies, track record and past successes, client list, test results, scientific evidence, a guarantee, a free trial, figures that demonstrate savings, etc.
  - Technical information.
  - Product specifications.
  - Proposals.
  - Reports.
  - Business profiles.
  - Presentations and speeches.
  - Photographs and illustrations.
  - Designs and logos.
  - The design or any design ideas to accompany the copy.
  - Competitors' ads, literature, and websites, especially those you like.