

Why the brief matters

An effective brief makes decisions easier, not just faster. It distinguishes the desired outcome from the first proposed feature.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 PROBLEM

Name the problem before naming the solution.

02 AUDIENCE

Identify whose needs guide the experience.

03 EVIDENCE

State what you already know and what remains an assumption.

TRY THIS

Prompt: Complete this sentence: “The website needs to help [audience] to [action] because [problem].”

Find the real problem

A request for more animation may actually be a request for differentiation. A request for more pages may hide weak navigation.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 REQUEST

What was originally asked for?

02 WHY

What underlying difficulty makes that request attractive?

03 ALTERNATIVE

What simpler intervention could solve the difficulty?

TRY THIS

Exercise: List three requests and, next to each, the underlying purpose. Keep requests and purposes separate.

Know your visitors

A good website is not built for a demographic stereotype. Describe situations, intentions, accessibility needs and actual visitor decisions.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 VISITOR

Who arrives and from where?

02 NEED

What question are they trying to answer?

03 ACTION

What is the next sensible step?

TRY THIS

Worksheet: Write two visitor scenarios; include one who visits using a small screen or keyboard.

Choose the right form

A brochure site, editorial archive and interactive experience solve different problems. Novelty should be justified by learning or action.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 INFORM

Visitors need trustworthy information.

02 DECIDE

Visitors must compare services or options.

03 EXPLORE

Manipulating the system produces genuine understanding.

TRY THIS

Decision: If the interaction fails, does the main message still remain accessible? If not, create a readable fallback.

Shape the information

Write the navigation as questions before writing it as page names. Each page deserves one clear job.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 DISCOVER

What do you do?

02 TRUST

What has been built, and what is verified?

03 ACT

How can somebody contact you?

TRY THIS

Exercise: Sketch a site map with Home, Services, Work and Contact; add a page only if it solves a distinct visitor need.

Prepare the content

Content readiness drives scope and schedule. Real services and verified evidence are more persuasive than filler.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 MUST HAVE

Accurate service descriptions and contact routes.

02 STRONG EVIDENCE

Working examples and labelled self-initiated work.

03 NEVER INVENT

Testimonials, client numbers, awards or outcomes.

TRY THIS

Worksheet: Make a two-column list: Available today / Needs sourcing. Assign an owner to every missing item.

Choose features with care

Every feature adds design, implementation, testing and maintenance cost. Prefer features that make a user task demonstrably easier.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 VALUE

Does it answer a real visitor question?

02 EFFORT

How much work and upkeep will it introduce?

03 FALLBACK

Will the core task work without it?

TRY THIS

Decision matrix: Score each proposed feature qualitatively as High/Medium/Low value and effort. Remove low-value, high-effort items.

Mobile and accessibility

Good interaction design is more than shrinking a desktop page. It includes touch targets, keyboard flow, readability and reduced motion.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 PERCEIVE

Clear headings, contrast and text alternatives.

02 OPERATE

Keyboard navigation and visible focus.

03 RECOVER

Errors are explained; content survives disabled scripts.

TRY THIS

Checklist: Test at 320px, zoom to 200%, navigate only by keyboard, and enable reduced motion.

Search foundations

Search engines need stable, readable pages. No legitimate process can guarantee indexing or an exact position.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 CONTENT

Useful HTML copy and descriptive titles.

02 DISCOVERY

Real links, sitemap and a sensible robots policy.

03 IDENTITY

Accurate canonical URLs and truthful structured data.

TRY THIS

Checklist: Verify every page title, canonical and internal link. Submit the sitemap after the public domain resolves.

Budget and scope

Budget is a trade-off conversation. Fewer pages with stronger content may outperform a larger collection of thin pages.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 CORE

Essential user journey and contact path.

02 OPTIONAL

Delight and exploratory interactions.

03 FUTURE

Later additions, integrations and maintenance.

TRY THIS

Exercise: Separate Must / Could / Later. Agree how revisions affect scope rather than relying on implied unlimited changes.

Milestones that make sense

Use review gates that correspond to decisions. Approval of structure must precede polishing fine visual details.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 01 DISCOVER

Goals, audiences and source material confirmed.

02 02 APPROVE

Page map and interaction direction agreed.

03 03 VALIDATE

Implementation reviewed on desktop/mobile and launch checklist passed.

TRY THIS

Planning: Write what must be supplied by each party at each gate. Leave calendar dates open until scope is agreed.

Two contrasting briefs

A weak brief describes taste alone. A useful brief communicates audience, intended action, content, constraints and measures of success.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 WEAK

"Make it premium, futuristic and viral."

02 BETTER

"Explain three services clearly to first-time clients and provide an email enquiry path."

03 BEST

"Test whether visitors can identify the right service and initiate contact using phone or keyboard."

TRY THIS

Exercise: Rewrite a vague creative request into a purpose, intended visitor and observable task.

Launch readiness

Before publishing, test the actual deployed address. Passing a local check does not prove a public domain is configured.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 FUNCTION

Navigation, actions, files and email links work.

02 QUALITY

Readability, responsive layout, keyboard and reduced-motion behaviour.

03 DISCOVERABILITY

HTTPS, sitemap, robots and page-specific canonical URLs.

TRY THIS

Print checklist: Check all three groups above. Record who tested, which device and any issues still open.

Your one-page commissioning brief

A strong beginning is a conversation, not a forty-page specification.

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER

01 OBJECTIVE

We want the project to accomplish...

02 AUDIENCE

The main visitor needs to...

03 CONSTRAINTS

Our content, budget, timeline and dependencies are...

TRY THIS

Send your brief to sahil@sahiltayal.com. Further reading: W3C WAI ([w3.org/WAI](https://www.w3.org/WAI)), web.dev (web.dev), Google Search Central (developers.google.com/search).
