THE BASIC COPY BRIEF

Projects started without basic information or established deadlines are projects that take much longer than necessary to complete.

**Project:** (What is the name of assignment?)

**Date:** (When was the job started?)

**Project contact information:** (Who is the project lead, the person overseeing this project in your dept., coordinating tasks, etc)

**Project Type:** (What are you writing copy for, e.g., a poster, brochure, web page, news release, etc.?)

**Project Specs:** (What are the relevant specifications such as size, color, word length, # of pages, etc.?)

**Deadlines:** (What are the due dates for drafts, review, final approval, go live etc.?)

**CREATIVE CONSIDERATIONS:**

It’s recommended that you answer each question below, and then use your answers as a basis for writing your copy.

1. **Communication objectives:** (What is the purpose of this communication, what action or impact do we want this to communication result in? Do you want viewers to register for an event, donate money, sign a petition, etc.)


3. **Key Message:** (What are the 2-3 most important points you want your audience to take away from this communication? What is the main benefit of your program, event or offering?)

4. **Call to Action:** (What action do you want your audience to take? Similar to Communication Objectives above, but as copy might appear: Register Today! Or Call (207) 555-5555 for more Information today. Or Visit our website for details: http://usm.maine.edu.)

See next page for Marketing Writing Tips
Marketing Writing Tips:

- Keep your key audiences in mind. Focus your content on what they are most interested in.
- Make sure key content elements are scannable in 5 seconds or less so you won’t lose visitors.
- Use headlines and subheadlines that provide meaningful information.
- Use clear and simple language... if the first scan draws people into the page, make it easy for them to read on for more details. Avoid jargon, acronyms and abbreviations that only insiders know. Proofread carefully!
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short — about 5 lines per paragraph. If you feel the urge to use a semi-colon in a sentence, that sentence just might be too long.
- Make it easy to navigate to important information, using hyperlinks and photo links to get people quickly to the information they are looking for on a website or in an email.
- When you use hyperlinks, make sure that the link language connects to what people will see first on the page they will arrive at so they know immediately they’re in the right place.
- Make calls to action easy to find and execute.

Here’s a simple exercise in “usability” — think of a question that you would like answered about another university (e.g., what sports teams do they have? Do they have an MFA program? Who is the head of the Biology Department?), go to their website and time how long it takes you to answer your own question.