

SWIFT DESIGNS GUIDE TO

Defining your own Tailor Made Design

THE 'BRIEF' QUESTIONNAIRE YOU
NEED TO KEEP YOUR PROJECT
SPECIFICATIONS ON TRACK





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DEFINING INTERIOR DESIGN

Congratulations, you've just taken the first step to defining your very own interior design!

This guide will help you if -

- You have no idea what your style is.
- or
- There's so much you like that you can't decide on just one.
- or
- You're afraid of making the wrong decisions and impacting on the functionality.
- or
- You know that making the wrong design choices can reduce the value of your home.
- or
- Your builder is putting pressure on you to make decisions and not delay the build!
- or
- You know that you need to change something in your home, but can't quite see what it is.

It can be so difficult to make decisions alone, and when you ask family or friends, their opinions can sometimes cause more confusion.

There's something intimidating about a freshly painted wall that prevents us from making the space our own. It's similar to writing on a blank page or drawing on a blank canvas... why is that?

...It's because when the space was being planned you didn't have a brief in place for it.

You've probably heard of a brief before, nothing new here, right?

The key to a brief working for you, is the way it's applied... trust me, keep reading!



Creating a brief

Creating a brief will help you overcome all of the points mentioned above and can be used to your advantage, ensuring all design elements are cohesive. A brief is based on all the wants and need of those living in or using the space.

Getting it right is crucial to the design outcome, so spend time on this. It can be used by professionals or by salespeople to assist you in your decision making, removing a lot of stress and confusion.

It's an easy process, that starts with collecting images. Online resources such as Houzz or Pinterest make this simple or you can do it the old-school way and cut out and paste onto a piece of card. This is the beginning of a Mood or Colour Board, which is a tool Interior Designers use all the time!

Once you have these, look for similarities in the images you've selected. These are the things that will create a cohesive look and feel throughout your new space.



Once you have images collected, ask yourself a bunch of questions, these are detailed on the following pages for you to work through.

How many briefs do I need?

When you start planning your build or renovation, create a separate brief for each separate space within your new home. Different brief's for different spaces allows for each room to have it's own look and function. It's likely you'll want a cohesive feel for the home as a whole and by doing the brief(s) for all the new spaces at the same time you will allow for these cohesive elements to be included.

Give a descriptive name to each brief, for example; 'Master bedroom retreat' versus a bedroom for your teenager to 'hang out' in. Or the 'kitchen' versus an 'entertainers space' - see how these titles offer different uses of the same type of space? Yet they will obviously be very different to live and work in.

Be descriptive and passionate, to get the feel of the space across to others

Once you have answered the questions in the following pages, summarise these into word form (supported by the images you've gathered).

An example of this is when I worked with clients who were avid outdoors people, they wanted a bathroom that made them feel like they do when tramping through a forest... so 'peaceful, green, natural & organic' were key words used in their brief.

Lastly... this is the most important part...

Once the brief has been defined and you are clear on the direction to take with the space,

Apply every decision to the brief.

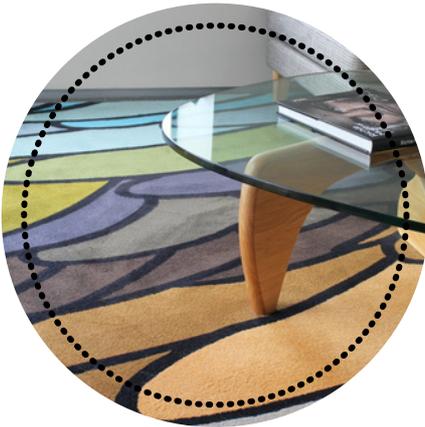
What I mean here is; when you're out shopping and deciding if the product is right or not so right for your space, ask yourself '**does it meet the brief?**'.

If the answer is 'no', don't buy it. If 'yes', then well done! When you do this last step you are keeping yourself on track in your decision making and the space will reflect the original intention.



Remember; You don't need to see every available option in order to make a decision and move forward with your design, all you need is confidence that the product you are looking at will fit the brief and the above steps will help you with this.

I hope that you can see this technique is very powerful and a huge time saver! By putting this into practice you will create the space you always wanted. The brief is the key to understanding your needs and desires for a space.



Now, go ahead and put this new knowledge to work...
answer the questions on the following pages to create your brief.

The Brief Questionnaire

How many people will use the space?

Plan for the biggest group and scale the space to fit. For example, if planning a bathroom, it is for a family of 2, 4 or 6 people to use? Obviously, the more people that use it, the more space is needed for storage etc.

What is the purpose of the space/how will it be used?

Remember to take into account, if you're working on an open plan living space, that it will potentially have many uses. These could include kids doing homework, reading, watching TV or videos on other devices, dining, working, entertaining guests. Plan accordingly. This suggested space will need to be big enough to accommodate all of these activities, and possibly have areas separated to do these things without impacting on others using the space at the same time. You may also need other rooms that have multiple uses.

The Brief Questionnaire

Do you need storage, if so what type and how much?

Be specific, are you storing linen or books, or are you creating a designer kitchen and need spice storage, an oil drawer and storage for the 'good' dinner set?

Is Eco, Passive, or Lifetime design important to you?

These design principles will impact on your material selections and the overall cost of your project. If you are unsure what these are, do some research and if you need further help talk to an Interior Designer to assist you.

Yes

No

I need to talk to a Designer for assistance with this

What age and size are the users of the space?

This is especially important in Kitchen and Bathroom design. The ergonomics of the space can be planned to work for larger or smaller than average people and also for the young and elderly to make it easier to use.

What is your budget?

Be honest with yourself. If building new, add a contingency of around 15% for unknown expenses. If you're renovating your contingency budget should be closer to 20%.

How long do you want this space to last before redecorating?

If you are building to resell the property you will likely make different material selections than if you plan to live in the home for 15 years and want ease of maintenance. Your decor choices will be impacted by this also; do you want it trendy for now and are happy to redo the room in 2 years, or do you want a timeless look that won't date for 10+ years?



The Brief Questionnaire

What design style(s) are you attracted too? Does your partner agree?

Do some research on design styles if you are unsure. Google Images is great for examining this. There are specific elements that make up each design style, from the images selected, work out what elements are needed to create a style you both agree on.

What is in your near future – retirement, a big family or three cocker spaniels?

Planning for the future, either long or short term, should be incorporated in every design. What are you needs now? What are they likely to be in the future?

How do you want the space to 'feel'?

Just like the clients I mentioned above who wanted their bathroom to feel like a walk in the woods, you may want a bedroom that feels romantic or peaceful. Do you want a kitchen that feels like a farmhouse kitchen, a commercial kitchen, an architectural kitchen?

Where are you willing to compromise & where do you need perfection?

Budgets get blown out all the time, so have a plan around where compromises can be made ahead of the start of your project, to achieve a less stressful experience.

Do you want a design team to help you?

With the knowledge and experience of a committed team working alongside you, you will save time, remove overwhelm, and enjoy the design and installation process. When working with Swift Designs, the outcome will exceed your desires and provide ease of living within your uniquely tailored space. Our promise to you is to interpret your style and understand your needs, use highly qualified craftspeople to create the designs we imagine together and then we'll take care of every logistical challenge – from procurement to delivery.

Our clients get a better design outcome while saving time, and we work within their specified budget.

Yes

No

I need a phone conversation to help me decide

The Brief Questionnaire

Why are you building or renovating? What is not working for you in your current living situation?

Again, be specific. Examples of a specific answers are 'I don't have power sockets where I need them' or 'I have nowhere to put my home office printer' or 'I can't reach my kitchen cupboards'. An answer such as 'my home is old and dated' is too vague. The more specific you are here the better the design will function for you.

What colours/textures or patterns do you NOT like?

Some people don't know what they like, but most know what they don't like. By eliminating what you don't like, you're more likely to find what to do like.

Do you need a large wardrobe, an ensuite, a scullery, a study, a media room, games room, wine cellar, covered outdoor entertaining – a ballroom?!

Consider changes in living arrangements that may like to include, like the kids moving out, or moving back home!

Do you want guaranteed success for the same money spent?

It's often thought that great design costs a lot and that doing it yourself will save you money. This is simply untrue and a false economy!

Swift Designs blend, timeless design with practical functionality to define tailor made spaces for you. Our transparent process guides our clients' design decisions, removing the stress and confusion through the build or renovation. We add industry expertise, a local supply network and purchasing leverage to your project.

Yes

No

I need a free discovery call to help me decide



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I've finished my brief(s), what do I do now?

Get planning, go shopping, meet with tradespeople and share your brief with everyone involved in your project! Respect your own time and be honest with yourself in your own capabilities, then outsource anything you are unsure of to professionals you can trust.

Interior design incorporates spacial planning, construction knowledge, joinery detailing, material, fixture & finishing selections, lighting design, decor, colours and soft furnishing.

If you found this guide to be useful and are motivated to create the space you love, book a free discovery call with us to ensure your brief is met, your design adds value and you don't cause delays in your build or renovation. Video consultation is available.

Click below to book your appointment.

Let's Design

About the author; Treena Swift is the owner and Creative Director of Swift Designs. Respected in her industry, she is a fully qualified & award winning Interior Designer with a growing list of exceptionally happy clients.

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