

CLIENT'S GUIDE



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**HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR
DESIGN PROJECT**



WHERE TO START

How to create a design brief before engaging an architect

Building or renovating your Car Dealership can and should be really exciting. However too often we hear stories unexpected surprises, misunderstandings between the builder, the client and the architect on the contracted scope of the project, and allowances for items not specified in the contract.

I have decided to do something about it.

It all comes down to the brief

A good working relationship with your architect is based on open, honest communication. This starts with a good brief that helps the architect understand your expectations, preferences, wants, needs, aspirations and lifestyle. If your expectations are not clearly outlined and understood by all parties, you run the risk of spending unnecessary money, project complications, and costly delays. The architect and builder will struggle to understand what to include when pricing your project.

A well thought-out design brief is the foundation for a successful project.

This guide will help you cover critical aspects of a design brief. Towards the end of this document, you will find two worksheets that will help you outline your design brief.

Right then! Let's get started...



WHERE TO START

Your Site

Scrutinize your site and get a real feel for it. Where is the sun in summer? Where are the views you and your customers want to enjoy every day and those you want to exclude? Where are the surrounding buildings and trees you may or may not want to see? Which parts of the site have the best access or frontage? Does the site slope? Have you obtained a Certificate of Title and Site Survey? Did you ask for local planning requirements? Do you understand Planning requirements, Setbacks and Plot Ratio required? Ask the planner. Are there site limitations like future road widening? Put all the information you have about your site in a file to share with your architect (legal paperwork/covenants, existing plans or previous site information).

Indoor Spaces

A good design can transform the way that we live and work. Think hard about your business current and future needs. Map out your daily routine. How many people work in the company? Who does what, and where? Don't forget that groups rapidly change their needs! Do you want to 'zone' spaces or separate the groups? Consider the number of floors, rooms and other spaces and describe their use. Make a list of who needs rooms to work or relax in. Where do you usually eat your lunch? Is your work style formal, casual, relaxed or active? Do you need spaces to sell indoor and/or outdoor? What type of communication do you want to include? List any special requirements you have, e.g. accessibility, extra storage areas, built in furniture/shelving. What method of heating or



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cooling do you want? What the other company members expect from the whole project?

Outdoor

What do you want to do outdoors? Sell cars? Entertain customers? Drive through service reception? How many cars do you need on display? How many parking bays do you need for customers and staff? Do you want a high or low maintenance scheme? What features are important to you? Think about the indoor/outdoor flow of spaces into the showroom, where the morning sun lands, where the building is exposed to and sheltered from the wind. Think of your external areas as outdoor rooms, and consider only clear and straight connections between all car trafficking areas. Listing your requirements (perhaps using our List of Rooms and Spaces template) will help both you and your architect quickly understand your priorities.

Design Mood and Feeling

This is important. This is your working environment you are going to spend most of the day. Think about the 'feel' of your project, do you want it to be bold, low-key, industrial, traditional, minimalist, contemporary or organic? What does your corporate brand require and which part you can vary? Do you worry about shutting the curtains to protect the furniture from the sun, or do you like to enjoy coffee on the terrace with closing tables? Describe spaces, design features and styles that appeal to you and those that don't. Create a 'mood board' of



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photographs, magazine clippings and anything else that can help your architect understand **who you are, how your company works and what you want from your project.** Use web-based photo sites to assemble and share your ideas.

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The Details

List major display cars and parts or accessories you are considering to fit in your showroom and any preferences you have about where you want to put them. Where do you prefer the sales closing desks? What ceiling height is expected for your corporate brand? Is it a single or double story showroom? Do you have lots of gadgets that need sockets in your island unit or floor? These details can make a big difference to the way your showroom and office space is planned. Note major pieces of furniture or display you want to showcase so your architect can provide spaces and sockets for them in the new plans. Better to include it in your planning from day one, than to move in and wonder where you are going to fit them when the showroom or office is already completed.

Sketching

Sketch out your thoughts, but don't get too wedded to them. If the work involves altering an existing building you'll be constrained by existing structures and services there will be lots of limitations on what you can change. If it's a new one, let your imagination flow, but be prepared for your architect to suggest other approaches. That is, after all, why you are hiring one!

Materials

List materials you like and dislike (inside and out), but be aware that your budget and corporate brand will be a determining factor in your final choice. Do you

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have any specific feature wall, ceiling and floor finishes in mind? Do you like render or timber cladding? Stone, slate, rubber, glass, steel, aluminum... the list is endless. Much will depend on the style of building and corporate finishes, but there are choices to be made that will determine how much you spend upfront, and how much you spend on maintenance in the longer term.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Regulation and rising energy costs are making sustainable 'green' design an essential consideration rather than a 'nice to have'. There are now minimum requirements laid down by Australian Standards and Building Codes. Your architect will know all about these and will discuss with you how 'green' you want to and can be. There are lots of renewable energy solutions - solar panels, rainwater harvesting to name but a few. Although these add costs upfront, they can save you money in the longer-term. Much will depend on your budget and **how long you plan to use** the building after the work has been done.



Timetable

Think about and share with your architect key target dates that are important to you. **When do you want to start and finish the project?** Bear in mind that, as a rule of thumb, it takes at least 4-6 months to agree the design, obtain planning permission and prepare construction drawings before building work can commence. You are less likely to be disappointed if you allow at least 6-12 months for work on existing buildings and about 18 months for new buildings.

Budget

We have prepared several typical cost plans for different types of Car Dealerships and these are available on request.

Lastly, have a conversation with yourself and keep asking why you want what it is you say you want. That way you are slowly elaborating your brief into more detail. Include the emotional aspects and the way customers use to buy cars as this is overriding deeper reasoning behind what you want to change about your building. Use the checklists provided below to help you get a deeper understanding of what you want and why you want it.

ANSWER THE WHYS



I want to upgrade or build a new Car Dealership, why?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

ANSWER THE WHYS



10. _____

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The nuts and bolts

Having listed the whys, we have dealt to the big elephant in the room. Now it is time to dwell on the nuts and bolts. The following is a series of questions that will further elaborate on your brief.

Who will be working in your Car Dealership?

What different new activities will you need to accommodate?

How do you want your Car Dealership to fit with the existing environment?

Are there any health and safety issues you need to take account of?

What would you really like to work in?

What do you want Car Dealership interior to look like?

What colors will it have (Including corporate colours)?

What facilities for cooling and heating do you want?

Do you want to install or upgrade existing security and/or audio systems?

Do you want a total makeover or a staged process?

What is your budget?

Does your budget allow for consultant fees and GST?

What level of involvement do you want in the management of your project?

CAR DEALERSHIPS

CLIENT'S GUIDE: HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR DESIGN PROJECT

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Congratulations! You now have the key information that will help you lay a successful foundation for how to prepare for your design project.

Unfortunately, I can't include every important piece of information about this very important step in the design and construction process successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the brief will differ based on a multitude of factors. But with the concepts explained in this guide, you have the critical information to help you create a design brief that will ensure that your project is a success.

If you are in the process of looking for an architect for your project, let's talk. I can help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure. I offer a custom [feasibility study](#) where I will identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the [feasibility study](#) saves my clients *thousands of dollars and weeks* of lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To read more about the [feasibility study](#) as well as the price for this service and why it is critically important to your project's success visit my website. If you are ready to talk now, feel free to give me a call.

Best wishes for the success of your project!

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