



**PaperChain**<sup>®</sup>  
*LINK & LEARN*<sup>SM</sup>

## Planning to Succeed

In these trying economic times, every customer, every call, is important. Prospects and advertisers are rightfully concerned about the future of their businesses. In this environment, business people and consumers carefully weigh each buying decision. Advertising sales people can no longer assume even long-term customers will buy, every sale must be justified. Risk adverse customers must be convinced that what you are offering has real value before they will commit their limited resources. This means that sales people who “shoot from the hip” will usually miss the mark. Advertising agencies have long used a “Creative Brief” to plan projects and demonstrate value to their clients. Producing a creative brief for your advertisers will help them (and you) see the “big picture.” Creative briefs are a good tool for getting customers to buy well planned programs rather than waste their budget on less effective random ads.

A creative brief is a roadmap that you can use to plan your clients advertising program. It should be a one-page document that clearly answers the why, the how and the who questions about an advertisers program. Each ad produced for a client should be in alignment with the goals and the strategies detailed in the creative brief. Crafting a plan that is aligned with the customer’s goals and values will be invaluable in securing the advertisers buy-in. Getting the customer to buy into the plan and keeping them focused on the long term objectives will protect the advertising program from being cut during temporary down turns.

Here are some elements that I like to include in a Creative Brief:

**Business Objective:** This needs to come from the customer and should be a concise statement of why they are in business. Obviously this objective should not be “To make lots of money”, though that should be a component of the statement. A good example of an objective statement for a restaurant could be: “Our objective is to become the most successful restaurant in the center city area by offering an outstanding selection of menu items, prepared to perfection and at an affordable price”.

**Communication Objective:** This is the message that the business wants to send out to the public. This statement should support the “Business Objective”. A Communication Objective supporting the Business Objective above would be to “Provide potential diners with information about the cuisine offered and provide them with incentives to visit the restaurant. We also want to associate the restaurant’s brand with quality and value.”

**You may download this and all issues of Link & Learn at [www.paperchainnetwork.net](http://www.paperchainnetwork.net)**



# PaperChain<sup>®</sup>

## LINK & LEARN<sup>SM</sup>

**Target Market(s):** This should describe the customers who the advertiser wants to attract. Clearly defining the people the client desires to reach makes developing an effective program much easier and prevents the customer from adopting a “shotgun” approach. An example of a target market statement would be something like: “Our objective is to reach lunch customers who work in the downtown area and who need to eat lunch within an hour but would still like to enjoy a quality meal. We also want to reach diners who come into the city in the evening to attend events in the cultural center and want to enjoy a meal as part of their evening. These people are interested in the dining “experience” so they are interested in the quality and uniqueness of the cuisine.”

**Strategy:** This is the nuts and bolts of the program proposed. This is where specific publications and ad copy are detailed. In the restaurant example we’ve been using it would read something like this: To accomplish our goals we would use a ¼ page ad in the downtown edition listing weekly lunch specials and offering a coupon to drive lunch traffic. Lunchtime patrons would be given coupons to incent them to return for dinner. A larger ad would be published in suburban editions that would emphasize the restaurants proximity to cultural attractions, list premier menu items and offer a coupon to encourage trial of the restaurant. This strategy is designed to drive traffic and create a “buzz” about the restaurant that will build favorable word of mouth.

**Client Strengths:** This section should list the advertiser’s strengths, the special features of the restaurant that attract people to come there. This would include things like extensive menu, large selection of wines, private rooms available etc. This is a listing of things that the advertiser would like the public to know about their business.

**Competitive challenges and responses:** Who are the business’s competitors and what do they promote to attract customers? An example of this would be: Oak Tree Restaurant promotes low cost but sacrifices quality to maintain their price-point. To meet this challenge we need to emphasize quality and value of the client’s cuisine.”

**Rational Response:** This section lists the hard information transmitted by the ad copy. This would be information such as products sold, hours etc. In our example this could be: “Each ad would list a weekly special that is indicative of the cuisine at the restaurant plus the line “Over 35 delicious northern Italian dinner entrees and the areas’ premier selection of fine wines”.



# PaperChain<sup>®</sup>

## LINK & LEARN<sup>SM</sup>

**Emotional Response:** This section addresses the emotional response the ad is intended to invoke. This section would talk about the look of ad graphics and the image the client wants to project. Example: “All ads will incorporate the grapevine logo motif and use a photo of diners enjoying their meal. The goal is to create an image of fine dining that is relaxed and not too “stuffy”.

Preparing a Creative Brief for an advertiser requires the rep to invest a considerable block of time but it is time well spent. This activity forces the salesperson and the client to think about the business’s advertising goal and message. It becomes a tool to keep their advertising on course in the face of competitive or economic challenges. Ideally the Creative Brief should be developed in conjunction with the advertiser. This positions the sales person as a consultant and takes the focus away from the “cost” of the advertising and puts it on to the objectives of the program. Clients who have given this level of thought to their program are not likely to change their program simply because a competitor offers a cheaper price. They are also less likely to drop a program because they have had a couple of bad weeks.

We are living through very tight economic times. The sales people who continue to succeed in the current economy are the sales people who step up to meet the challenge the sales people who are willing to deliver outstanding service and go the extra mile for their clients. Developing a creative brief can help both the salesperson and the business owner by producing the best possible return on the customer’s advertising investment. Years ago an old school sales manager told me something that is as true today as it was when I first heard it 30 years ago...“Failing to plan is planning to fail!”

## XYZ Publications

### **Creative Brief prepared for: Pimento Garden Restaurant**

**Business Objective:** Pimento Garden’s objective is to become the most successful restaurant in the center city area by offering an outstanding selection of menu items, prepared to perfection and at an affordable price.

**Communication Objective:** To provide potential diners with information about the cuisine offered and provide them with incentives to visit the restaurant. We also want to associate the restaurant’s brand with quality and value.



# PaperChain<sup>®</sup>

## LINK & LEARN<sup>SM</sup>

**Target Market(s):** Pimento Garden's target market consists of lunch customers who work in the downtown area and who need to eat lunch within an hour but would still like to enjoy a quality meal. We also want to reach diners who come into the city in the evening to attend events in the cultural center and want to enjoy a meal as part of their evening. These people are interested in the dining "experience" so they are interested in the quality and uniqueness of the cuisine.

**Strategy:** To accomplish our goals we will use a ¼ page ad in the downtown edition listing weekly lunch specials and offering a coupon to drive lunch traffic. Lunchtime patrons would be given coupons to incent them to return for dinner. A larger ad would be published in suburban editions that would emphasize the restaurants proximity to cultural attractions, list premier menu items and offer a coupon to encourage trial of the restaurant. This strategy is designed to drive traffic and create a "buzz" about the restaurant that will build favorable word of mouth.

**Client Strengths:** Pimento Garden's strengths include the area's most extensive Italian menu, a four star chef and an excellent wine list. The restaurant is well situated in the downtown business/cultural district.

**Competitive challenges and responses:** Pimento Garden's primary competitor is the Oak Tree Restaurant. This competitor promotes low cost but sacrifices quality to maintain their price-point. To meet this challenge we need to emphasize quality and value of our cuisine.

**Rational Response:** Each ad would list a weekly special that is indicative of the cuisine at the restaurant plus the line "Over 35 delicious northern Italian dinner entrees and the areas' premier selection of fine wines".

**Emotional Response:** All ads will incorporate Pimento Garden's grapevine logo motif and use a photo of diners enjoying their meal. The goal is to create an image of fine dining that is relaxed and not too "stuffy".

Link & Learn is brought to you every month as part of PaperChain's<sup>®</sup> mission to provide educational material to the free paper publishers. Be sure to check out [www.paperchainnetwork.net](http://www.paperchainnetwork.net) for past issues, electronic ready promotional ads and much more to help you remain competitive.

**You may download this and all issues of Link & Learn at [www.paperchainnetwork.net](http://www.paperchainnetwork.net)**