

WHY ARE WE ADVERTISING?
What are we hoping to accomplish through this effort? What is the goal? This is how we gauge the campaign's effectiveness, so we better be clear on our objectives from the start. What do you want people to do? Be specific. And make sure it's something that the advertising itself can directly affect, rather than some overall business objective.
WHO ARE WE TALKING TO?
Both demographically and psychographically. Who are these people? Where do they live? Do they tend to have unique characteristics? More importantly, what makes these people tick? What do they love? What do they fear? What are their hot buttons?
WHAT DO PEOPLE CURRENTLY THINK?
Enter the mind, body and soul of the person you just described. What do they think now? Before being exposed to the communications you're going to create. Write in their words, not yours. Write it as a quote. Be brutally honest, even if it means saying something your client may not want to hear.
WHAT WOULD WE LIKE THEM TO THINK?
If the last section was the "before", here's the "after". What do you want them to think? Again, write this as a quote in words a consumer would use. Change often comes in baby steps - and an ad won't change the world overnight. So what's realistic for them to think about Brand X after being exposed to the communication?
WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT IDEA WE CAN CONVEY?
One idea. One. (1). What's the <i>one</i> thing we can say/communicate/demonstrate that will get people to do what we want them to do? Remember, we're talking to consumers, not ourselves. The one thing we say has to be relevant, different, important and valuable to get people to truly think or behave differently.
WHY SHOULD THEY BELIEVE IT?
You just made a promise on behalf of the brand in the last section. Just saying it doesn't make it so. List the proof points that pay it off - an inventory of facts that we can draw upon so people will believe what we say. To prove that we should be taken seriously. To demonstrate that we don't just talk-the-talk; but walk-the-walk.
WHAT IS THE BRAND'S PERSONALITY?
If you had to describe this brand as if it were a person to someone else, how would you do it? What traits, qualities and characteristics best define this person? You should be able to describe this brand as easily as you would your best friend or your next-door neighbor.

WHAT ARE THE MANDATORIES?

What elements must appear in this and every ad we do? Logo, website, 800#, social media touts, legal disclaimers, etc.