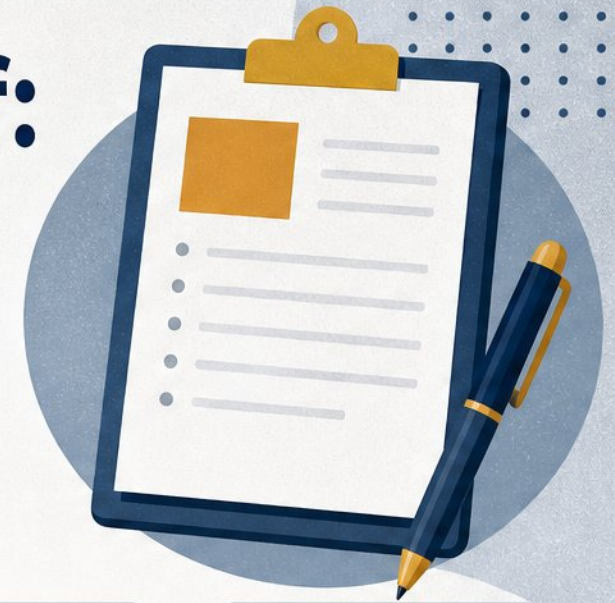


Creating a Content Brief: From Audience Task to Actionable Blueprint



- A content brief is a strategic decision tool, not a form to fill out.
- It differs from creative briefs: it guides specific content production, not campaigns.
- Core workflow: Audience Task → Core Message → Evidence Boundaries → Format → Next Step.
- A well-structured brief prevents rework, misalignment, and stakeholder friction.

The Brief as a Strategic Decision Tool

- Translates strategy into actionable creator instructions
- Answers the 'why' before a single word is written
- Maps to business outcomes, not just page views
- Guides human writers and AI runs from one document



Defining the Audience Task: What Job Are They Hiring This Content To Do?



- Identify the specific task or progress the audience needs to make, not just demographics



- Frame the task: "When [situation], I want to [motivation], so I can [outcome]."



- Map the trigger event, anxieties, and the audience's own "definition of done."



- Validate the task against business goals so the content serves both user and org



Crafting the Core Message:

One Big Idea to Remember



- Filter all details through one memorable, singular takeaway



- Use the 'hallway conversation' test for clarity and recall



- Apply the Message Box: Issue, Problem, So-What, Solution, Benefit



- Anchor the message in the audience's task to prevent generic output



Setting the Evidence Boundaries



- Define clear inclusion and exclusion criteria for data and claims



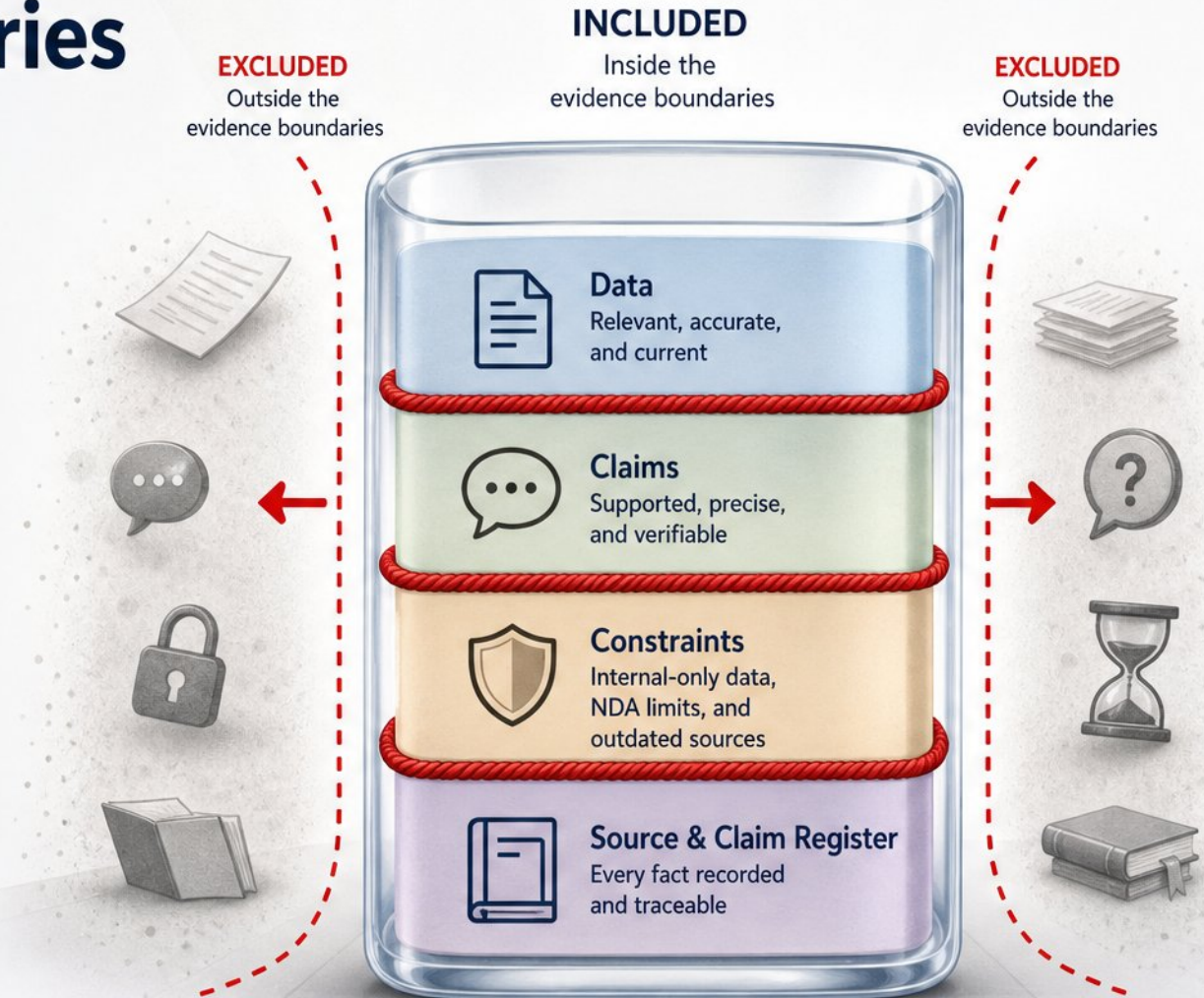
- Specify 'good enough' evidence levels for each audience and format



- Document constraints: internal-only data, NDA limits, and outdated sources

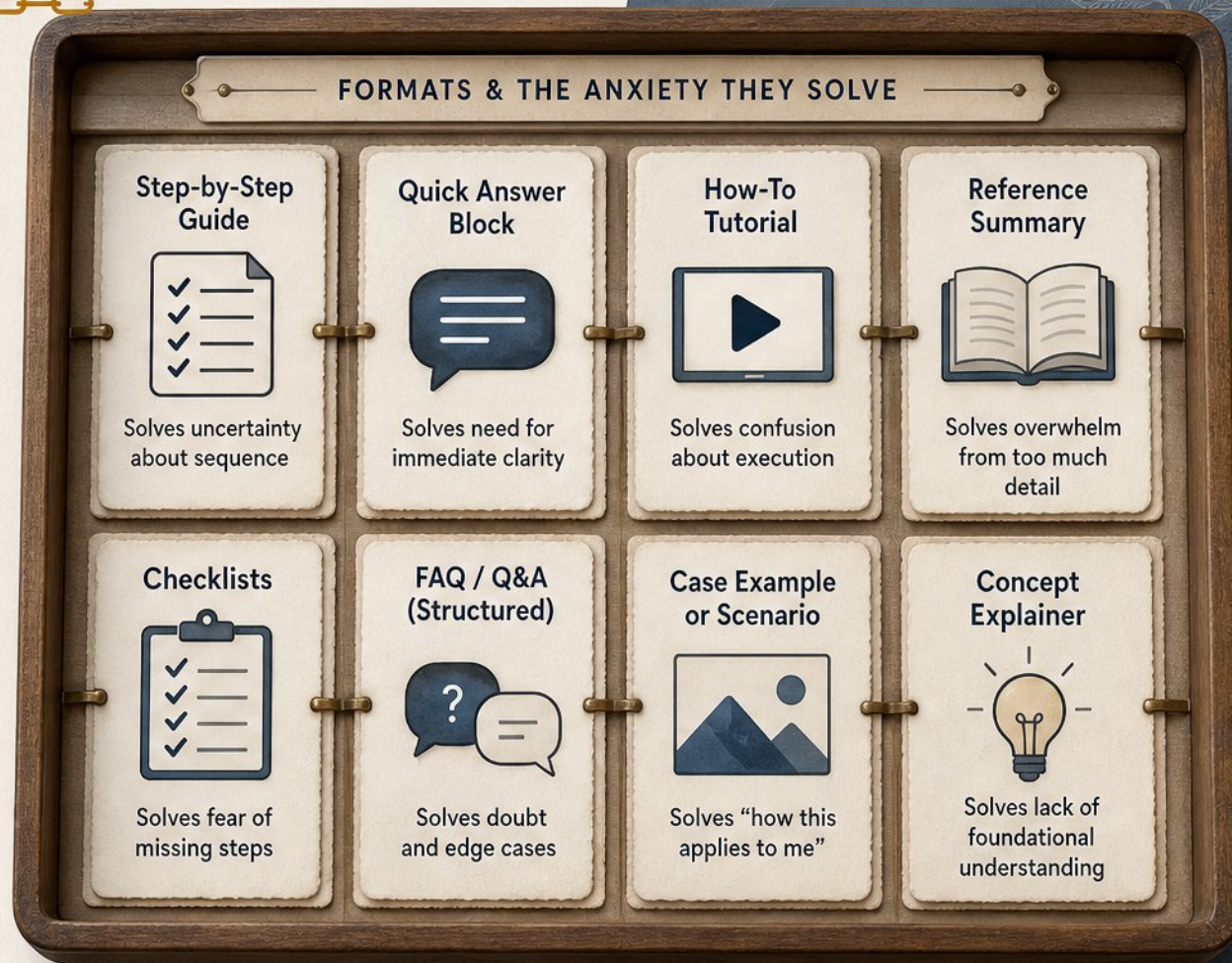


- Create a source and claim register to make every fact traceable



Choosing the Right Format

- Match format to the audience's task and anxiety level
- A mismatch kills engagement even with strong content
- Specify word count, visuals, multimedia, and accessibility
- Use answer-first blocks and structured FAQs for AI discovery



NARRATIVE CHAIN / LINKED TASK FLOW



Articulating the Next Step: Designing for Action



- Specify one measurable action, not just “learn more”



- Connect the CTA to the core message and the audience's job



- Brief the CTA with the exact URL, label, and insertion point



- Validate: can the next step be tracked and acted on?



Take the Next Step

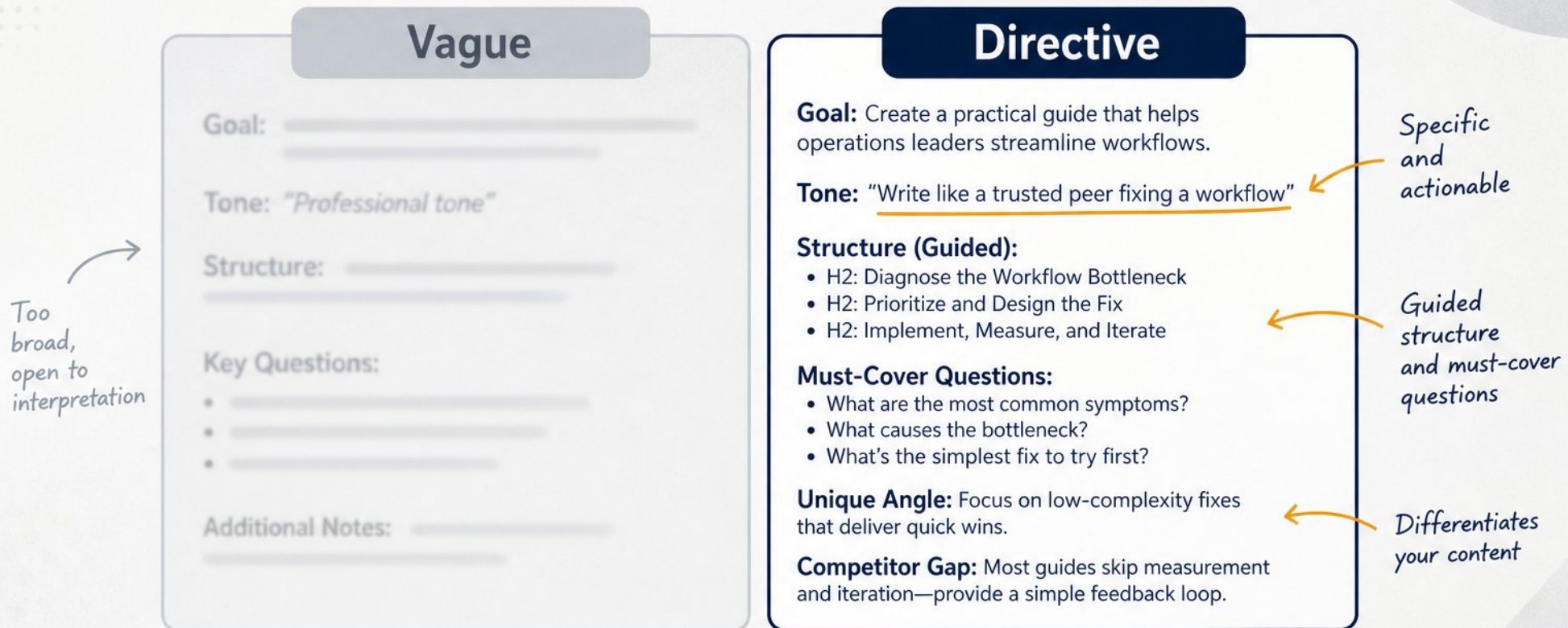


The Structural Anatomy of an Executable Brief

- - Five non-negotiable sections: Task, Message, Evidence, Format, Next Step.
- - Split search intent from answer intent; split entity coverage from structure.
- - Fill-in-the-gaps model prevents creative drift but preserves craft.
- - Encode E-E-A-T (Who/How/Why) as mandatory fields, not suggestions.



Writing Brief Fields That Drive Execution



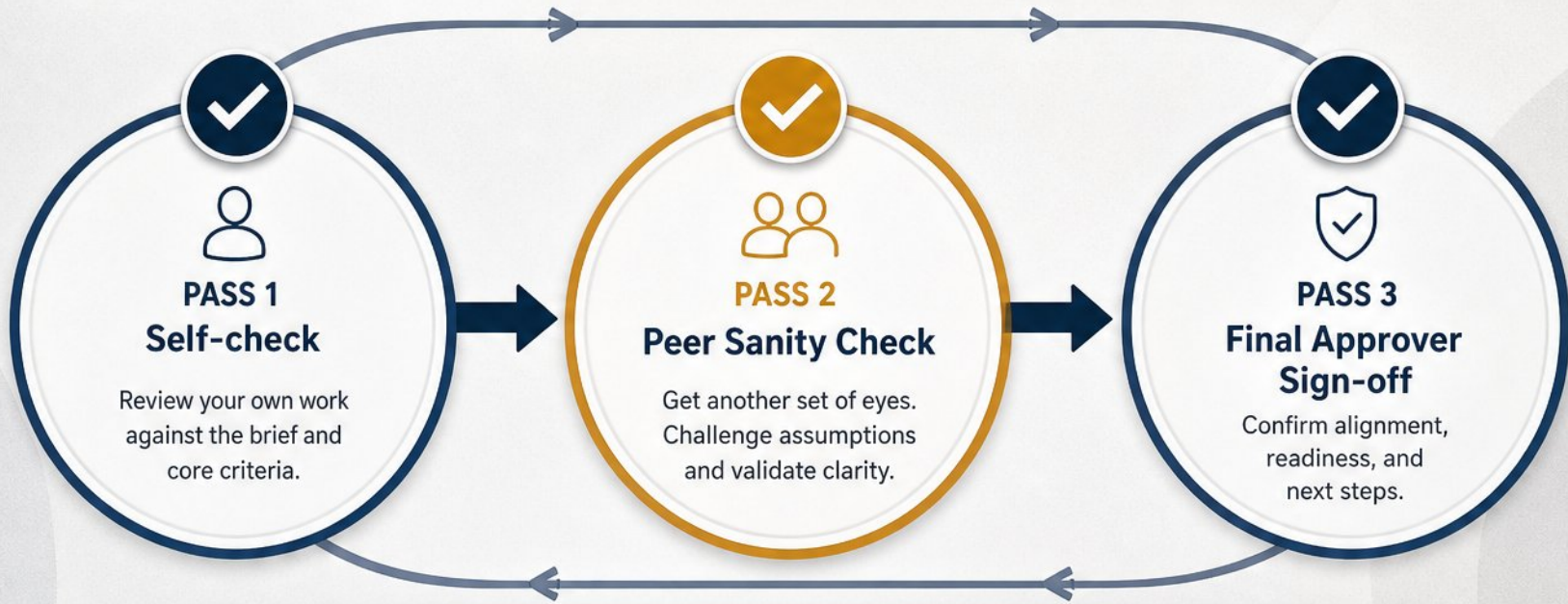
- Use plain, directive language: instruct, don't inspire
- Vague: "Professional tone"; Good: "Write like a trusted peer fixing a workflow"
- Provide guided H2/H3 structures and must-cover questions, not rigid scripts
- "Unique Angle" and "Competitor Gap" fields prevent commodity content

The Handoff: A Contract for Quality

- Treat the brief as a pre-draft contract for success.
- Include a writer-and-AI submission checklist scored on identical gates.
- Use kickoff conversations to prevent downstream rework.
- Establish a shared 'definition of done' before production.



Pressure-Testing the Brief: A 3-Pass Review Model



- **A structured review workflow:** Self-check, Peer Sanity Check, and Final Approver Sign-off.



- **Self-check:** Is the task user-centric? Is the message singular? Are boundaries clear? Is the next step trackable?



- **Common failure modes:** misaligned intent, wrong depth, and unactionable next steps.



- **Stakeholder review:** Secure aligned input on goals and evidence, avoiding design-by-committee.

Putting It into Practice: From Brief to Finished Content



Adjust the brief when fresh audience data challenges original assumptions



Measure success by task completion, not just page views or rankings



Operationalize the brief as a mandatory, living system—not a one-off doc



Trigger refreshes after ranking drops, business pivots, or behavior shifts



Revisit job statements every 2-3 quarters to prevent planning for a past audience



Final Exercise and Key Takeaways

- Draft a mini content brief from a given audience task
- Workflow: Audience Task → Core Message → Evidence → Format → Next Step
- A brief is a decision tool, not a form — it trades guesswork for a shared blueprint
- Make briefing the foundational skill for quality, efficiency, and measurable impact



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