

CONTEXT & IMPACT

Goal: Understand the broader context and the client's intent.

Reflection: *"By researching similar projects in other cities, I immediately gained input for my design strategy."*

Example focus questions:

Social / political / business climate:

- What societal, political, or business developments are relevant?
- Who preceded you? Are there parties who have already addressed this?
- What other activities is the client organizing in this context?
- What else do you need to research to map out the background and current affairs on this topic?

Lessons learned

- What has the client already done or tried?
- What went well or poorly in the previous process?
- How does the client look back on that now?
- What do they particularly want to avoid or repeat this time?

Impact:

- What is the underlying problem the client is trying to solve?
- What is the desired short- and long-term impact?

Possible methods: Stakeholder Mapping, Trend Analysis, Empathy Mapping

DESIGN NEEDS & CAPACITIES

Goal: Determine what types of design skills and processes are required.

Reflection: *“At first I thought I had to design a new product, but it turned out to be mainly about guiding behavior change within a team. That completely changed my approach.”*

Example focus questions:

Needs

- Is the assignment about creating something new, improving something existing, or facilitating change?
- Is there a need for imagination, analysis, participation, strategy... or something else?
- What type of designers or expertise is required?

Method or roadmap

- What is the level of openness or rigidity in the assignment?
- Are there preferred methods, tools, or formats to use?
- What interactions are expected and with what purpose?

Visibility

- Which elements will be publicly visible, and what does that require in terms of elaboration, design, visual identity?

Possible methods: Design Sprint, Speculative Design, Co-creation, Systems Thinking

CLIENT REQUESTS & GOALS

Goal: Analyze what is being asked explicitly and implicitly.

Reflection: *“The briefing asked for a campaign, but between the lines it turned out to be mostly about creating internal support.”*

Example focus questions:

Explicit

- What is explicitly stated in the briefing as the assignment?
- What are the process requirements?
- What are the deliverables?
- What are the criteria?
- What are the deadlines?
- What is the budget?

Implicit

- What is not directly stated but is described between the lines?
- What is not in the assignment but has been mentioned or can be inferred from other sources and company communication?

Contradictions

- Where are there contradictions or ambiguities in the briefing?
- What opportunities and risks do you see in the client request?

Possible methods: Reframing, Brief Rewriting, Problem Definition

COLLABORATION & EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT Doel:

Goal: Map out relationships, roles, and responsibilities.

Reflection: *"In a previous project, I thought the communications advisor was my main client, but it turned out to be the alderman. Since then, I always check who really makes the decisions."*

Example focus questions:

Expectations

- How do you establish certainties in a creative process with an open end?

Roles

- What role is expected of you and what falls outside of it?
- How proactive or reactive should you be?
- Who is dependent on you?
- How will you facilitate collaboration (with users or stakeholders)?
- How do you involve the client during the assignment?
- What interim results will you present?

Collaboration

- Who is involved in supervising the assignment?
- How will they organize this guidance?
- Which experts are available?
- What other support do you need?

Possible methods: Participatory Design, Role Mapping, Journey Mapping, Mapping Thinking

GAPS & QUESTIONS

Goal: Identify what is missing or raises a red flag for you.

Reflection: *“The briefing mentioned a launch event, but not the available budget or audience. I explicitly asked about that to avoid blind spots.”*

Example focus questions:

Feasibility

- Are there unrealistic demands in the briefing?
- Is specific domain knowledge needed that you (still) lack?
- Is what is being asked very vague or too specific?
- Are you asked to design a solution for a complex problem?
- Are you encouraged to make promises you can't keep?

Dependencies

- Is your approach dependent on things like regulations, prototypes, research outcomes?
- Is your schedule dependent on external factors?
- Is the assignment strongly top-down managed?
- Which resources or tools are essential but not mentioned?

Other

- Do you need to invest in the project yourself?

Possible methods: Interviewing, Assumption Busting, Inquiry by Design