



SHELF COMMS BRIEF BUILDER

To get more from your POS display, start by thinking about the job you need it to do, then choose the appropriate format. "We need a wobler" feels like progress, but formats are vehicles, not strategy.

This builder helps you to brief shelf comms (POS) design around what matters: where it will live in the shopper journey, what job it needs to do, and what the shopper needs next to make a purchase.

When to use this guide: If a retailer asks what support you're putting behind the range, your product is getting lost on shelf, shoppers are unclear about their choices at fixture, or you're preparing for a seasonal push.

Three decisions that change everything

1 What problem are we trying to fix?

- Low awareness?
- Poor fixture navigation?
- Lack of confidence?
- Weak activation?
- Complex product sale?
- Shoppers defaulting to a better-known competitor?

2 Choose the moment in the shopper journey

- Entrance / arrival
- Wayfinding / navigation
- Browsing (before commitment)
- Fixture decision (choice moment)
- In-hand reassurance (close-up)
- Checkout / impulse

3 Choose the primary job to be done

Effective comms usually does one job (sometimes two).

- Stop
- Guide
- Educate
- Reassure
- Simplify
- Activate

Campaign context (keeping your message on track)

Most shelf communications sit inside a wider campaign. If that's true here, capture it before you write the message.

Campaign name / theme: _____

Campaign objective (Awareness / Trial / Range navigation / Sell-through / Seasonal push / Other): _____

The one campaign message we must stay consistent with: _____

What shelf comms is doing within the campaign:

- o Translate the campaign idea into a shelf decision
- o Make the range easier to choose
- o Provide proof / reassurance
- o Prompt an action (try / buy / trade up)

What not to do on shelf (to avoid clutter or mixed messages): _____

Reality check): If the campaign idea is too abstract to become a clear Hook on shelf, it needs translating before you design anything.

The six jobs of POS shelf comms:

Use this panel as a quick reference for the different comms roles.

Stop: Catch the eye and earn a second look.

Reassure: Reduce perceived risk and affirm the right choice.

Guide: Point people to the right place or the right product fast.

Simplify: Make a multi-option choice feel easy.

Educate: Explain what it is, how it works, or why it matters.

Activate: Prompt a clear next step.

Reality check: If your comms tries to do too much, it usually does none of it well.

Write the message in layers

This is the core of the brief. The aim is to be specific, to make the shopper journey easier.

Hook (wins attention)

Short. Decisive. One clear idea. It should set the tone immediately, whether that's confident, playful, reassuring, premium or no-nonsense. If this is tied to a campaign, the Hook should translate the campaign message for the shelf.

Help (makes the choice easier)

Help answers the question that's stopping the shopper from acting: Which is the right one? What is it for? Or, how should I use it? Turning the campaign big idea into a practical step.

Evidence (earns belief)

One reason to believe: useful spec, guarantee, reassurance, compatibility or comparison.

Next (tells them what to do)

Choose this / compare here / scan to check / ask in store.



Reality check (30 seconds):
If you've got three Hooks, you don't have a Hook!

If you're stuck: Write the Hook as if it has to be read in under a second. Or write the Help line so it can be understood by someone who's distracted.

Brand check: Does the message feel like it belongs to our brand? Does it create the right feeling at shelf? Could a competitor use the same line with their logo on it? Is the creative treatment distinctive enough to be noticed, but simple enough to help the shopper decide?

Format is your delivery mechanism

Formats don't come with a fixed job. A shelf strip can guide or educate. A wobblor can stop someone, but it can also reassure or simplify. What matters is distance, dwell time, what the shopper is doing in that moment, and what job you need performed.

Format chooser:

GUIDE

Signpost navigation to direct the shopper

- Pull-up banner
- Poster
- Hanging banner
- Floor decal

STOP

Use bold, quick and easy to read formats

- Header
- Fin
- Wobblor
- End feature

HELP

Use comparison/chooser formats close to decision

- Strip
- Talker
- Small panel

Common mistake

Communicating your message in the wrong location/format e.g. trying to educate at the entrance. If it needs explaining, it belongs closer to the decision.

Reality check: Does your format match the job to be done? Check the format suits the job you need it to do.

The digital layer

QR codes and screens can be useful when the job is demonstration, compatibility, or helping someone choose the right product. However, here's a warning: a QR code that lands on a generic homepage is worse than no QR at all.

If you include a QR, it must:

- Answer one question quickly.
- Be mobile-first.
- Work in under 10 seconds.
- Match the promise on shelf.

Reality check : If it takes longer than ten seconds to get value, most people won't bother.



If you're stuck, ask: What's the one question a hesitant shopper is trying to answer? Build the QR destination to answer that, and nothing else.

Real-world constraints (the unglamorous bit that decides whether it works)

POS material that's hard to place, tidy, or replenish, is likely to end up at the back of the stockroom. Great shelf comms respects the retail realities.

Constraints to capture

- **Retailer rules** (claims, pricing, sustainability, sizes, materials).
- **Store realities** (fixtures, space, staff time, replenishment).
- **Must-haves vs nice-to-haves.**
- Anything that could cause **confusion or complaints.**



If you're stuck: If you don't know the retailer rules, write what you do know, and flag what needs confirming before artwork begins.

Reality check: If you ignore constraints, you're going to get comms that never make it onto the shop floor.

Measuring effectiveness

You don't need a complex measurement plan. You need a way to spot whether it's working and what's failing.

Pick what's realistic

- Staff feedback (what questions shoppers ask, what they pick up).
- Photos (placement + condition after 2-3 weeks).
- Basic sales figures (where available).
- QR/URL click-throughs (only if it's genuinely useful and tracked).

Reality check: If you can't measure it, don't panic! Photos and staff feedback catch most failures early.



One-page brief

Use this page to brief your team, your agency, or your designer.

Aim

What needs to happen? What does success look like? _____

Campaign context (if relevant)

Campaign name/theme: _____

Campaign message (non-negotiable): _____

Role of this shelf comms within the campaign: _____

Product context

What is it? Who is it for? What problem does it solve? _____

Shopper moment

Where does this live in store, and what is the shopper doing in that moment? _____

Primary job (circle one): Stop / Guide / Educate / Reassure / Simplify / Activate / Other _____

Message (Hook / Help / Proof / Next)

Hook: _____ Proof: _____

Help: _____ Next: _____

Format and placement

What formats are in scope, and exactly where will they sit? Include anything to avoid. _____

Digital layer (only if needed)

What question is the shopper trying to answer, and where will the QR code or screen take them? _____

Constraints

Retailer rules, size limits, claims restrictions, production notes: _____

Quick measurement

How will we tell if it's working? _____