



Solving 7 marketing project management challenges.

Bringing renewed speed and agility to the marketing department.





There are some stressors all marketers accept as “part of the job”: starting projects with imperfect or incomplete information, bargaining with co-workers for access to specific team members, sailing past deadlines, late-night scrambling to finalize files and get them out the door, and more. According to a recent survey of marketers across the globe, 9 out of 10 report frustrations that keep them from completing their highest-value work. In fact, marketers spend 81 percent of their workday juggling activities like meetings, administrative work, email, hunting down files, and triaging work requests. That doesn’t leave much time for getting the highest-value work done. And the common solutions—working nights and weekends to catch up, mandatory status meetings, unruly resourcing spreadsheets, and more—are nothing more than band-aids.

9/10

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We put up with these frustrations because we believe they’re part of the rite of passage to make it in the marketing world. But these challenges don’t have to define your day-to-day. To find the best way to skillfully manage heavy and complicated workloads, you need to understand the true sources of the frustrations marketers face on a regular basis. Read on to learn seven of the most common challenges and what you can do to fix them.



Planning work in a world of ever-evolving customer demands.

The biggest challenge any marketer faces is planning and prioritizing work based on the shifting preferences of their audience. Up against an ever-increasing demand for highly personalized digital campaigns and content, marketers need to create and deliver at speed and scale. On top of that, they must produce more high-quality work, often with fewer resources, while collaborating and innovating with colleagues remotely. And they need to make quick, data-driven decisions about their audiences—what content they want and how they want to consume it.





SOLUTION

Use data to adopt a more strategic, nimble approach to work.

The best marketing leaders understand that work itself must be managed strategically, driven by the wants and needs of the customer. As the marketplace shifts, you need a way to understand the cost of responding to that shift. A work management application allows you to plan work by comparing the effect different scenarios have on your timeline, budget, and resourcing. This type of scenario planning can help you compare multiple approaches, pick the direction that best aligns with your new priorities, and move forward with speed and confidence. As we've all experienced, the market can shift on a dime, so having an application that allows this type of agility across all stages of work—from the initial brief through the delivery and optimization of campaigns—is crucial.

Fielding work requests from every direction.

If your team has no consistent way to receive work requests, there is bound to be confusion about who wants what when, and that confusion can affect the entire project, from beginning to end. Right now, you probably receive requests—whether ad-hoc or planned—in the form of email, instant message, or conversations at the lunch table. But without a central repository for requests, teams may miss, misunderstand, or misplace some of them.

Even when requests get to the right person, they may not understand how to prioritize them. Some team members may complete work based on their personal preference or relationship with the requestor. Other requests may sit in limbo because no one knows which resources are available to work on them, or how important they may be to the organization as a whole.



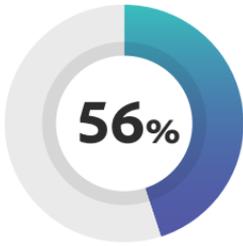


SOLUTION

Streamline your intake process.

Before you can begin to prioritize requests, you must know what the requests are. And that means consolidating all your requests—planned and ad-hoc—into a single, unified intake system. Esri, a GIS mapping software company was able to consolidate 74 different request systems from all over the company into a single work management application that gave everyone full visibility into the work coming into and moving through the organization.

Another way to streamline the intake process is to develop a standardized brief, ensuring all requests include the information you need to accurately fulfill the request—what the request is, what resources you'll need to complete it, and when it needs to be done. You may think that briefs are a common part of the marketing work lifecycle, but a recent survey found that 56 percent of marketers only use a brief for big, tier one



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projects, and 11 percent use no briefs at all. A brief lets you know the “why” behind any given project, allowing you to strategically assign the right people and resources to give the work a smooth start.

Once you have all work requests stored in the same location and in the same format, you can begin to prioritize what work gets done first.

The most successful companies apply a strategic lens to the prioritization of work, measuring each request against constantly changing strategic goals and initiatives. This allows the marketing department to be more agile, prioritizing requests that align the most with those goals above others and ensuring the right work is always being done at the right time.



Resource constraints stall projects at the outset.

How often have you assigned a project, only to find the team you need to work on it is already drowning in requests? Or you manage to secure the resources you need, but the scope of the project is much larger than initially thought? It's incredibly common. Of those 90 percent of marketers who reported frustrations at work, 21 percent of them cite inadequate resources to handle growing workloads as a major challenge, and an additional 17 percent report insufficient visibility into project status and productivity, making it unnecessarily difficult to properly anticipate and prioritize what work needs to get done.

Without visibility into resources—who is working on what—as well as each team member's capacity to take on new work, you may overburden some team members while leaving others sitting idle. Additionally, if you don't understand the scope of work you assign, you risk missing deadlines and running over your initial budget.



SOLUTION

Adopt a method to see what's on everyone's plate.

A full view of resource workloads prevents team members from becoming overworked and overwhelmed. It also prevents those with too little to do from feeling undervalued. When determining assignments, it's important to consider availability, job roles, strengths, and preferences. One way to view everyone's workload is with a centralized calendar that shows all the milestones for each in-progress project, as well as considerations like PTO and holidays. A global advertising agency was able to save 1,000 hours (about one and a half months) annually by replacing weekly resourcing meetings with a centralized availability calendar.

This centralized calendar can also be a source of valuable information to help you build out templates for projects that follow a similar structure. For example, you know that when you need to assign the creation of a new webpage, you'll have to source a UX designer to create wireframe, a copywriter to write content, a designer to design the page, and a developer to build, QA, and publish the page. Add in rounds of review and you have a step-by-step workflow for all future webpage creation projects. And with data from your central calendar at your disposal, you can also forecast how long the project will take to complete.

Using templates for repeatable work makes it quick and easy to assign projects based on tasks and job roles. Templates simplify future work because all steps are listed—no one misses a task or wastes time trying to figure out what needs to be done. Organizations that perform at a high level are three times more likely than a low-performing organization to use standardized management practices across the organization.



Review cycles happen in fits and starts.

Customers are increasingly hungry for personalized experiences. A Salesforce survey recently discovered that for the first time most customers—52 percent—expect their content to always be personalized. Despite the complexities increased personalization adds to your work, you can't compromise speed in service of more personalized content. Finding ways to keep work on track and moving quickly through your organization is crucial.

Anyone who has had to coordinate a stakeholder meeting for a review, whether in a conference or virtual room, is intimately familiar with how much time is lost just waiting for everyone's availability to line up. And for creative teams, responding to and incorporating feedback that comes from multiple channels—the average marketing department reports using eight separate tools to create and communicate—makes it difficult to complete work in a timely fashion. The key to speeding up the entire creative process is to make reviewing and approving work as seamless as possible and allowing everyone to use the tools they're already comfortable with.



SOLUTION

Digitize the review and approval process.

Begin by consolidating tools shared across your marketing department—including work, proofing, communication, and management tools. Take an inventory of all the software and applications your team uses to collaborate on work, then determine which are most useful, which can be consolidated, and which should be replaced with new solutions. Evaluate the tools that waste the most time and eliminate them completely.

Next, consider an approval process that includes a digital proofing tool. Such a tool keeps proofing in one location so everyone can be on the same page with feedback and stay abreast of the asset's review status. Better yet, a tool that automatically routes reviews to stakeholders that also allows them to see versions side-by-side elicits more efficient feedback at each stage of the project. Keep all comments, feedback, conversations, notes, and

updates in a central location that any team member can view at any time and eliminate the need for unwieldy version control. When all team members have access to all project information and communication, they can spend less time searching and reworking, and more time doing the work (the right way the first time).

By putting these practices in place, the marketing team at Allianz, a global financial services provider, was able to cut the number and duration of internal meetings in half. And the GIS mapping software company Esri was able to cut approval of print collateral pieces from two weeks to 90 minutes.



Marketing print collateral approvals

2 weeks —————> **90 minutes**
before Adobe Workfront with Adobe Workfront

Disorganization delays the delivery of work.

Content creation makes up a huge part of many brands' annual marketing spend. Research done by Communicate Magazine estimates that up to 35 percent of the average marketing budget is dedicated to the creation and delivery of content, and that stat is growing by nearly 10 percent every year. But how much of that spend is on the actual creation, and how much is spent on hunting down the right version of an asset, or an up-to-date style guide?

Most marketing departments store assets in server-based folder systems with limited metadata, which makes browsing frustrating, slow, and ineffective. Duplication and multiple disconnected systems only add to the problem, leading to team members spending an average of 3.5 hours a week hunting down content. And that's just for assets they know they have—oftentimes, money is spent creating something new when the perfect asset already exists but no one even knows it.





SOLUTION

Identify one location for final assets.

Having one location for final assets allows everyone to see the available assets and the most up-to-date version. Stakeholders know where they can access it instantaneously. You will also want to define the system for publishing content, such as a digital asset manager (DAM).

Having a work management product or system that can integrate with a DAM and automate metadata can all but eliminate the menial, repetitive tasks of tagging, naming, organizing, and sharing assets that bog down any organization trying to deliver content at speed and scale.

Inefficient communication adds time and invites misunderstandings.

For most marketers, critical information is rarely received by all stakeholders at the same time, or in the same form. An updated brief sits unopened in an inbox. Feedback trickles in hours or days after a review via email or text or marked-up printouts. This form of cascading communication means that no one ever truly has the complete picture, making collaboration difficult. If you can collect all those conversations in one location, you can ensure the entire team has full visibility of what's happening.



SOLUTION

Break down silos with a centralized work management solution.

Implement a solution that keeps all information in one place and makes it easy for team members to leave comments in threads that are preserved throughout the project lifecycle. This way, marketers avoid silos and ensure information is visible to all stakeholders. Additionally, create a communication plan for each type of project. Decide how often team members need to meet or post status updates through the central online location you select so that questions can be answered quickly and red flags can be raised early. An ideal work management application connects every facet of work—so there's greater collaboration across the work lifecycle.

Work can't improve without taking stock.

There are two ways to measure work—seeing how it performs in the market and assessing how efficient your team was in creating it. Both are crucial to gaining a full picture of performance measurement. Though many businesses regularly track campaign performance in the market and optimize accordingly based on customer response, few put as much energy into tracking how quickly and efficiently work moves through the organization, from intake to publishing.





SOLUTION

Track wins and losses, both internally and in the market.

In addition to measuring the performance of external campaigns, set up tracking and reporting methods to gain insight into how to improve processes and bring increased efficiency to future projects. Many teams choose to track lead time and on-time delivery rates, as well as milestones along the way. Track billable hours and how often you stay on budget, as well as when you go over budget. You can see where to adjust for future projects and where to improve work efficiency.

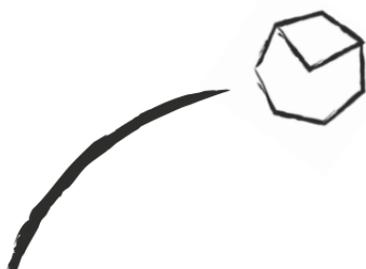
It's also important to survey stakeholders for feedback and satisfaction levels to gauge team success and evaluate the work, offering valuable insights into the type of work your organization values most.

Take back your workweek with Adobe Workfront.

Empowering your team to devote more than 19 percent of their time doing the creative, high-value work they were hired to do requires tackling these common challenges head on. A work management solution like Adobe Workfront can help you:

- Streamline incoming work requests
- Improve visibility into workflows
- Better manage deadlines
- Improve productivity and efficiency
- Easily publish content to a DAM
- Improve communication
- Gain visibility into data

Learn more how Adobe Workfront can help your team deliver great work at speed and scale with [*The Complete Guide to Work Management for Marketers.*](#)



Sources

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