



Speed as a Lever to Brand Success

Celtra CA Creative Automation
for Marketing

 **MARKETING DIVE**

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C OVID-19 will one day be in the rearview mirror, but it has clearly changed the road ahead for marketers.

The pandemic's lockdowns arrived at a time when content consumption across digital channels was on the rise and new channels were proliferating. U.S. adults spent an average of seven hours and 50 minutes per day with digital in 2020, a 15% increase from 2019, according to [eMarketer](#). The researchers expect that time spent to increase slightly in 2021.

It's challenging to leverage so many touch points from a creative standpoint. Likewise, differentiation is critical: Brands can't run the same creative across channels and expect the same results. They must create different stories in various formats for a variety of campaign types. Throw new privacy regulations into the mix and there's the added pressure to move away from mindless targeting and get back to brand, telling stories faster than ever.





Meanwhile, with the pandemic causing frequent disruptions and presenting fresh sales opportunities, marketers have had to quickly adapt to new environments and experiment with fresh strategies. They won't toss those learnings after the coronavirus has faded.

The software enables brands and agency teams to unlock speed, scale, variety and other benefits without compromising quality. Yet many teams still rely on manual production, which is a slow task that doesn't add value. Keeping up with the accelerating cycle of content

production and content consumption becomes a struggle, and marketing suffers as a result.

There's another way. Teams can use software to automate the production of digital creative. "Leveraging creative automation allows you to collaborate and produce assets more efficiently than ever before," said Andrew Slater, vice president, enterprise sales at Celtra. And designers are able to spend more time on strategic work, like breaking into a new channel/format, instead of manual production of creative variants."

Brands Must Produce Creative That Resonates

Having time for ideation is vital for creatives because creative variety at scale is key to driving growth and performance. Many marketers fall short, however. Our research found that 66% of consumers found creative assets from brands to be repetitive. One way to offer audiences a broader blend of content is to use different storytelling approaches, a method 92% of marketers told us they used.

Retailer TechStyle Fashion Group, for example, generated 25% more ads in 2020 than in 2019, according to MarTech Today. The company, which has a number of membership-based digital brands, strengthened its consumer base by developing content that was relatable to audiences experiencing the pandemic, according to the article.



Today, more refined storytelling wins over rampant retargeting across the web. The impending demise of third-party cookies and other privacy-related moves by tech companies are prompting a focus away from sophisticated targeting algorithms and back to pixel-perfect creative excellence with stories that resonate with customers. The 2020s truly mark the return to quality.

Sometimes quality can be achieved by having the agility to jump on global events and cultural moments. For instance, early into the pandemic, [Nike ran a campaign promoting social distancing](#) with the copy, “If you ever dreamed of playing for millions around the world, now is your chance. Play inside, play for the world.” Around that time, [Guinness ran a heartfelt “St. Patrick’s Day Message”](#) celebrating friendship and family, saying “we’ll march again” and urging viewers to “be good to one another.” Months later, [Reddit broadcast a five-second Super Bowl ad](#) shortly after its users made headlines for helping to drive up the value of GameStop’s stock.

An entertaining story or message is what first grabs a customer’s attention, according to 29% of marketers we surveyed, but creatives also face pressure to produce high-quality design and layouts, which 34% of marketers say first catch a customer’s eye.

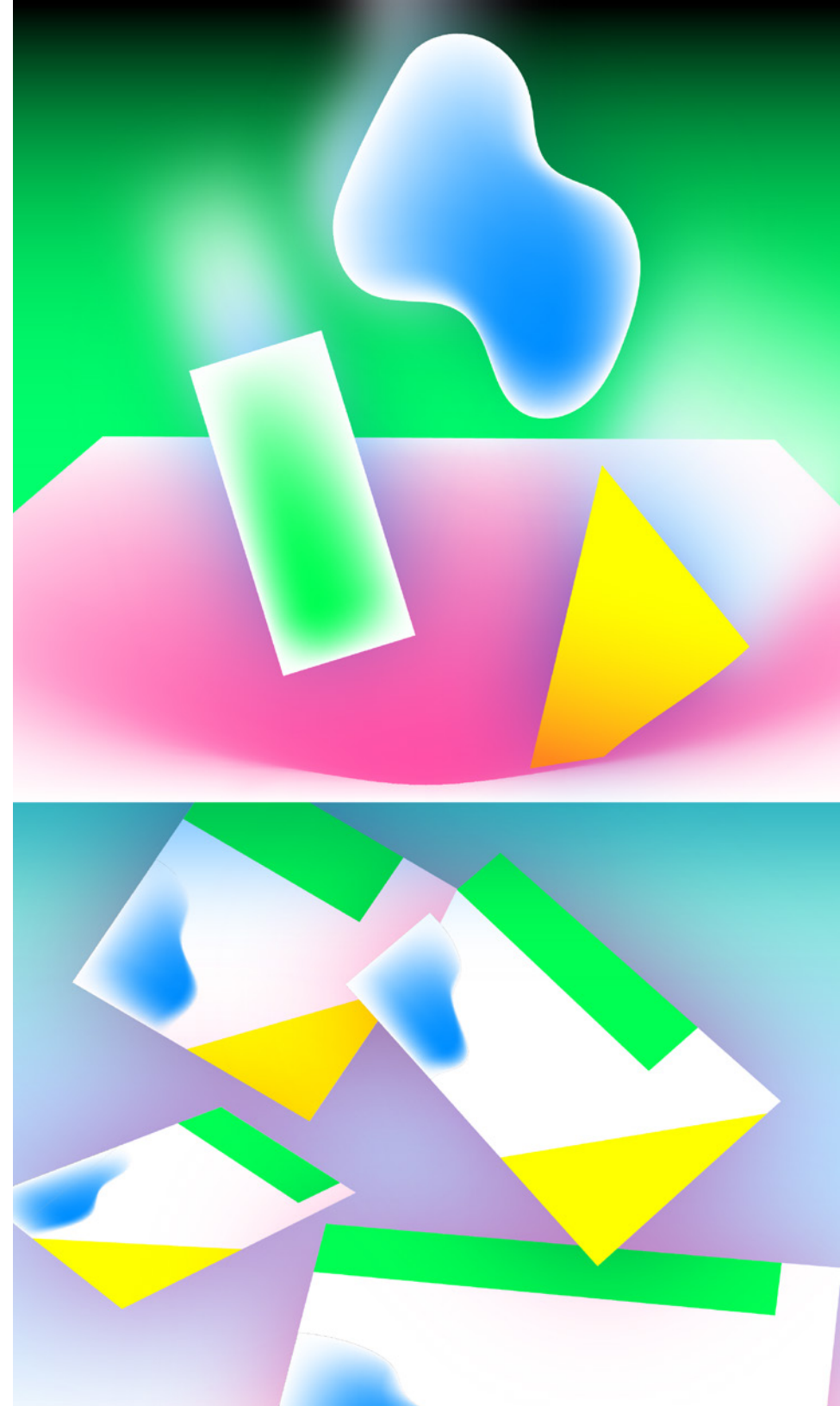
Creatives have other regular tasks on their to-do lists. They must quickly repurpose existing assets into different formats, urgently tweak live campaigns to respond to changing market circumstances, produce multiple variants they can test and subsequently optimize and increase speed to market when expanding into new regions or launching products.



Inefficiencies That Slow Down Creative Production

Although the creativity involved in generating assets that are relevant, relatable and memorable takes time, our research found that 86% of marketers said their creative team needed more time to devote to creativity.

Old-school workflows involving creative revisions and manual production ultimately stunt creativity. Designers, producers, marketers and other project stakeholders use email, chat, project-management software and legacy design tools to send comments, approvals and screenshots back and forth. They also work in a linear way, like a factory where one team member works on a task before passing the asset to the next person.





However, while the broader effort is bogged down, creatives work frantically to manually build ads, and many of those teams have gotten leaner and work remotely. They handle time-consuming repetitive tasks associated with resizing, reformatting and scaling out channel-specific campaigns. It's easy to see how teams low on time and resources end up limiting the volume they produce and also inadvertently introduce errors.

Many brands with this kind of cumbersome production engine were forced to pause their advertising at the start of the pandemic. They simply weren't nimble enough to act with the speed of culture and shift to visuals and messaging that were appropriate for the altered realities of social distancing and lockdowns.

This slow-moving process is a problem as well when brands want to create variants based on an existing concept or design, such as promoting a sneaker in a new color. "Teams need to engage the whole machinery again to change an image or copy," said Vanja B. Brzin, vice president, product marketing at Celtra.

Brands Use Fresh Approaches To Solve Speed and Agility Challenges

Some companies find they can work faster if they create their own in-house agencies. [A 2020 report from the In-House Agency Forum](#) found that 75% of the 288 U.S. corporations surveyed had an internal shop — an increase of 4 percentage points since its 2019 study.

Companies also outsource work to freelancers and adopt new agency models such as the one offered by [Oliver](#), which designs, builds and runs in-house agencies for brands.





In addition, creatives introduce technology to unlock speed. They use software to reframe workflows around creative and organize collaboration for a remote workforce. They ditch linear briefing and production involving multiple feedback rounds of uploads and downloads.

Likewise, marketers use some kind of creative automation to multiply production capacity. We found that 88% of marketers said their creative teams leveraged automation tools to streamline creative development.

Creative automation is a new category of software, however, so many use unsophisticated legacy tools. These may include generic templates that don't typically enable customization. They pigeonhole creatives into static designs, which makes it hard to be on brand with a unique voice. "The creative production process has been underserved in terms of software that can support it," Brzin said.

Brands Can Leverage Software for Unified Creative Production

Now, with creative automation, internal and external partners can collaborate in real time using separate workspaces but in the same cloud-based web tool that separates design from content. Designers can create and customize a library of master templates for various channels and sizes. A content manager or other stakeholder can simultaneously build feeds populated with images, offers, translations and other kinds of content that will connect to the templates.

“The software allows marketers and designers to collaborate incredibly efficiently no matter where they are in the world,” Slater said. “It allows teams to see how the design and content work together in real-time across all variants. In contrast, the same process can take forever with manual production.”

In addition, reviewers can leave comments directly on the work and approve multiple assets in one fell swoop. “Communicating about content used to take a lot of energy and back and forth,” said Petra Krulc, Celtra’s senior vice president, creative success, who also heads its global digital creative hub, Celtra Studio. “Now, stakeholders can use one collaborative space to discuss the work, and the process goes smoother and faster.”



Creative Automation Enables Scalable Production

Software that automates repetitive production tasks can generate thousands of campaign variations at the press of a button. “You can scale those variants easily across various channels, designs and sizes while preserving an extremely high level of design craftsmanship and reducing human error,” Krulc said.

Another bonus: Marketers and other nondesigners can adjust assets on the fly — except for attributes that designers have locked to ensure brand consistency, such as the logo placement.



Benefits C-level Executives Can Appreciate

Creative automation can help teams accelerate productivity in measurable ways. [We found brands can experience two times faster creative production cycles and triple their creative volume.](#)

Automation enabled Spotify, the music-streaming and media-services company, to produce and launch four times more content for its global summer campaign with twice as fast production cycles. [YETI's in-house agency](#) was even able to pivot its campaign strategy and deliver new assets to multiple markets just days after the premium cooler brand uncovered new insights through data mining.



Likewise, a direct-to-consumer brand found it didn't need to duplicate the entire production process to create new content every time it wanted to enter a new market. Rather, it could set up global templates and create localized versions of content in a single day without even involving a designer.



By enabling software to perform tedious production tasks, creatives have more time to focus on what they really want to do: create digital ads that are beautiful and interesting. “This time and space bring quality to the table,” Krulc said.

In addition, creatives that work under one roof or remotely can quickly and easily change existing campaigns for better performance and variety or to address changing marketplace circumstances and cultural events.

Today, large and small enterprises use robust automation solutions to speed up production and become more agile. Brands can out-market competitors and gain market share when they're able to produce and scale digital assets faster than ever without sacrificing quality or brand consistency.

“The brands value creative automation because it's making their marketing efforts more efficient.” Krulc said.

How much time and money can a hypothetical global brand activating across different markets save by using creative automation instead of manual production?

Based on aggregated Celtra software data that we turned into an ROI calculator, here's our estimate:

If the brand has:

- 1 campaign
- 4 designs
- 10 sizes and formats
- 12 languages/markets
- 480 total assets needed
- 2 designers working manually 40 hours each at an average hourly rate of \$80

With creative automation,
the brand could be

88 times

more efficient

and save

\$557,000

on manual production

if it were to outsource.

How much time and money can a hypothetical e-commerce brand with a new product launch save by using creative automation instead of manual production?

Based on aggregated Celtra software data that we turned into an ROI calculator, here's our estimate:

If the brand has:

- 4 campaigns per year
- 3 designs
- 12 sizes and formats
- 5 content variants (such as different messaging and different product images)
- 2 languages/markets
- 360 total assets needed
- 2 designers working manually 32 hours each at an average hourly rate of \$80

With creative automation,
the brand could be

117 times

more efficient

and save

\$2.4 million

on manual production

if it were to outsource.

How much time and money can a hypothetical direct-to-consumer brand expanding into its first international market save by using creative automation instead of manual production?

Based on aggregated Celtra software data that we turned into an ROI calculator, here's our estimate:

If the brand has:

- 1 campaign
- 4 designs
- 10 sizes and formats
- 5 content variants (such as different messaging and different product images)
- 5 languages/markets
- 1,000 total assets needed
- 2 designers working manually 80 hours (or 2 weeks) each at an average hourly rate of \$80

With creative automation,
the brand could be

162 times

more efficient

and save

\$2.1 million

on manual production

if it were to outsource.

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Celtra CA Creative Automation for Marketing

Celtra helps creative and in-house marketing teams design, approve, and deliver digital creative across the ever-growing number of campaigns, markets, designs, and variants. Celtra's Creative Automation Software for Marketing helps brands move faster than ever while dramatically scaling content production. Companies like adidas, Spotify, Unilever, Lululemon, YETI, and hundreds more partner with Celtra to cut production costs while increasing efficiencies and output in the cloud.

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studioID is Industry Dive's global content studio offering brands an ROI rich tool kit: Deep industry expertise, first-party audience insights, an editorial approach to brand storytelling, and targeted distribution capabilities. Our trusted in-house content marketers help brands power insights-fueled content programs that nurture prospects and customers from discovery through to purchase, connecting brand to demand.

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