

# Taming your content supply chain— where to begin.

Practical strategies for enterprises to  
unlock content beyond human scale.

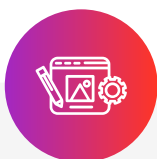
By: **Tammy Pienknagura** | **Remington Lee**

As efforts to attract and engage customers become increasingly competitive, organizations are facing an exponential demand for more just-in-time hyper-personalized content. “Demand for content shows no signs of slowing, with nearly two-thirds of customer experience professionals expecting demand to rise five-fold over the next two years,” said Amit Ahuja, Senior Vice President, Digital Experience Business at Adobe.

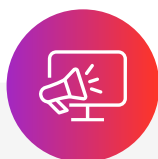
However, the process to plan, create, manage, and activate high-impact content – known as the content supply chain - has become incredibly costly, fragmented, and time consuming. As can be seen in [Adobe's 2023 Digital Trends](#) report, less than a third of practitioners said they can produce content in a way that eliminates rework, duplication of effort, and administrative minutia.



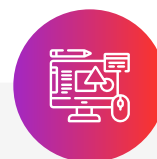
Meanwhile, marketing budgets are flat or declining, leaving executives with the challenge – and opportunity – to re-think their content supply chains. Recent market and technology trends, inclusive of generative AI, can now make this a reality, and help businesses across industries to:



Produce content beyond human-scale to deliver compelling, personalized experiences



Bring more campaigns to market in less time—all while controlling costs



Maintain a globally consistent brand voice and visual identity



This playbook lays out steps and strategies for transforming your content supply chain into an engine for experience-led growth.



# Five key challenges organizations face when transforming their content supply chains.



In working with enterprises across industries and regions, Adobe has found five roadblocks that repeatedly come up as organizations attempt to modernize their content supply chains.

## 1. Limited visibility into existing and planned content across the enterprise.

At many companies, final, approved assets reside in multiple repositories, including hard drives and personal cloud storage, and there is no easy way to find them across teams, geos, and functions. It is also virtually impossible to search for content that is still being planned and developed. This leads to wasted effort, duplicative spending, and low rates of content reuse. "Based on our conversations with customers, we often see that 50 to 70% of content produced is never used because teams can't easily find it," said Tammy Pienknagura, Head of Strategy and Innovation for Content Supply Chain at Adobe.

## 2. Lack of a unified approach to content data and governance.

In our experience, few organizations have adopted and enforced a consistent nomenclature and metadata strategy for content across teams—and even fewer have implemented automation to ensure assets are consistently and regularly tagged. "Without a global metadata strategy, it becomes incredibly difficult to find and re-use content, manage rights tied to assets, and gain insights into asset performance at any meaningful level of scale," stated Remington Lee, Head of Content Consulting for Adobe Professional Services.

In a study covering 900 organizations, Adobe assessed their content supply chain maturity to uncover that **82%** of marketing teams don't have a metadata strategy—and **90%** still require manual effort to create metadata and tag assets. Many different people and teams may own the content supply chain.

## 3. Highly manual and siloed content workflows.

Teams involved in content production and delivery frequently find themselves chasing people and information instead of focusing on their core areas of expertise. "Creative staff like graphic designers spend hours interpreting feedback from multiple stakeholders, searching for the latest content version, localizing ads, and other highly repetitive, low-value activities," observed Pienknagura. Extremely manual and broken processes also make it difficult for teams to stay aligned on goals and requirements, increase the opportunity for errors, and significantly delay the approval and routing of final assets.

As per Adobe's content supply chain maturity assessment, **73%** marketers said they don't have integrated tools for managing reviews and approvals.

#### 4. Reliance on highly specialized, overburdened teams.

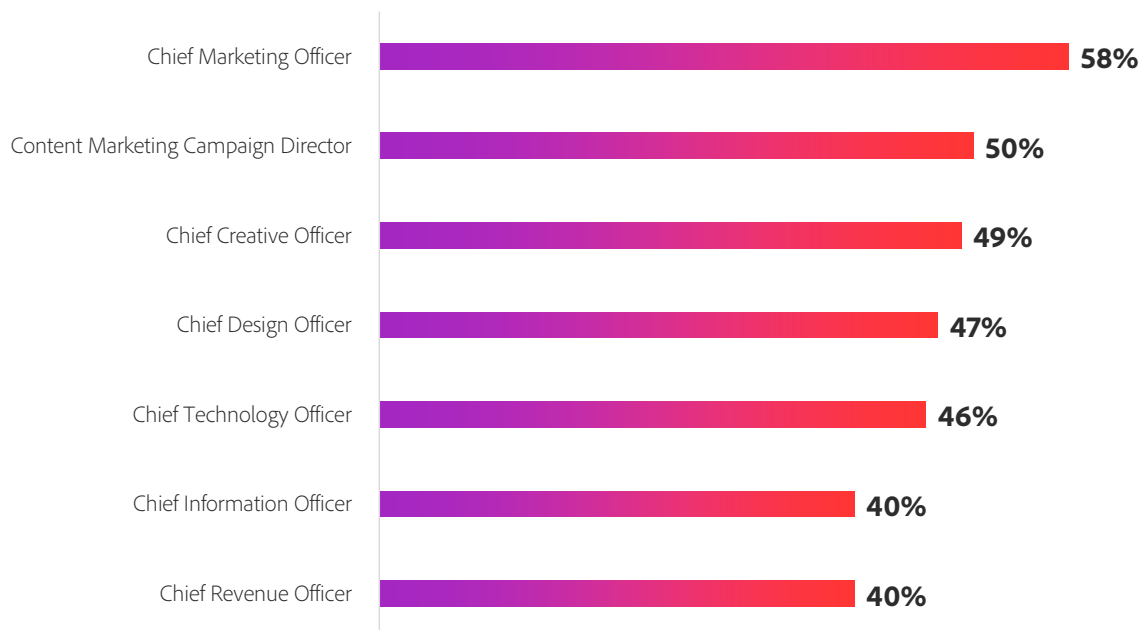
At most companies, virtually all content projects require specialized staff like graphic designers, audiovisual experts, and copywriters. And as mentioned earlier, these specialists, whether internal or external, are increasingly spending time on non-creative activities, such as resizing assets for different channels, managing feedback and information flows, or even logging timecards. “Not only does this mean you’re using a costly resource for low-skilled work, but it also contributes to burnout and turnover on creative services teams,” explained Pienknagura. This exacerbates the content bottleneck and can over time negatively impact the quality of what is created.

According to the assessment, **65%** marketers rated themselves as Nascent or Basic in automation for content resizing—and **89%** require manual effort or outsourced services to localize content for multi-market projects.

#### 5. No clear owner of content strategy or governance model.

Ownership of the content supply chain is typically broken across departments. Leaders from marketing, design, revenue, and IT – sometimes at a regional or LOB level - are often responsible for parts of the content lifecycle and yet make decisions independently. As a result, shared services teams may not know how to prioritize requests for content, and business units often leverage bespoke processes and vendors. This limits organizations’ ability to optimize costs, measure success, and make thoughtful decisions. “What ultimately happens is that fragmented teams and leaders spend precious resources duplicating projects that could have been reused from somewhere else in the organization,” said Lee.

In a 400-organization Content Supply Chain Research by Adobe in North America, respondents identified the following roles as having responsibility for the content supply chain:





# Four essential strategies to transform your content supply chain.



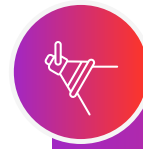
Based on our work with hundreds of organizations globally, we have identified four strategies for unlocking the content supply chain. Below, we'll outline critical steps for getting started, as well as advanced approaches for higher-maturity organizations. These strategies are:

- 1. Transform the organization and operations**
- 2. Build connected, intelligent workflows**
- 3. Accelerate creation and scaled production**
- 4. Enable omnichannel distribution and activation**

## 1. Transform the organization and operations

Position your team for success by understanding where you stand today in terms of content resources, output, and usage, defining initial priorities and empowering leaders to drive your content supply chain transformation:

- Make this a C-level priority. At most companies, the CMO will sponsor the initiative and work in tight collaboration with the company's technology and operations leaders.
- Establish a baseline of your current content operation, including spend and output across teams and formats, key pain points, and utilization rate.
- Identify a senior owner for the transformation across the organization and goals to track progress against.
- Re-think how shared services teams can best support content efforts, piloting new approaches and re-drafting charters and engagement guidelines for business units.
- Score early wins by eliminating areas of duplication and consolidating your pool of vendors to those that consistently deliver the most value.
- Define initial ways for your organization to adopt generative AI and begin evaluating solutions and governance needs.



Content supply chain transformation spotlight: **Adobe**

"We wanted to create a highly operational and efficient content supply chain, yet this required company-wide change and impacted tools, processes, and how marketing teams work together. We got started by executing a rapid discovery on the current state to clearly identify pain points and pockets of excellence. We then focused on a few high-impact pilots, supported by clearly defined operating processes and strategies for end-to-end execution and digital asset management."

—Mike Inman,  
Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives,  
Adobe Global Marketing

### Avoid these pitfalls.

- ✗ Not assigning and empowering a senior owner or team to drive the transformation.
- ✗ Not investing in change management.
- ✗ Not involving key stakeholders across the content lifecycle in early pilots and tests.
- ✗ Not identifying an initial place to start and rapidly test new capabilities.

### Advanced transformational strategies.

- ✓ Form cross-functional committees to share and evaluate best practices.
- ✓ Rapidly track and optimize progress of initial pilots and extend them to your broader organization.
- ✓ Fuel continuous improvement through ongoing testing and assessment of new capabilities.
- ✓ Conduct ongoing reskilling and upskilling of talent.

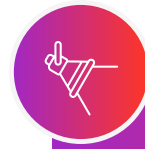


## 2.

## Build connected, intelligent workflows

Drive higher speed to market and less “spin” across your teams through integrated tools and processes, minimizing time spent on tracking versions, status, tasks, and briefs, while gaining insights for ongoing process improvements:

- Map out critical content needs across the enterprise—by region, format, and channel—and identify stakeholders across stages to partner with.
- Choose one or two workflows to prioritize for redesign. You may wish to consider selecting ones known to be frustrating and time-consuming, such as intake requests or stakeholder review and approval.
- Conduct pilots for new workflows, focusing on simplifying handoffs and information sharing. Adjust as needed, share early wins broadly, and plan for expansion to other teams with necessary integrations.
- Brief teams on new processes and guidelines and make education and outreach a priority in parallel.



Content supply chain transformation spotlight: **Thermo Fisher Scientific**

By redesigning and automating content review and approval workflows, Thermo Fisher Scientific:



Reduced overall project duration by **20%**



Achieved **24%** reduction in the duration of legal reviews

“At such a large organization, it’s impossible to pay attention to everything. Adobe gives us the ability to pull in the right information and show it to the right people at the right time so that they can do their work and not worry about all the other noise.”

—**Amy Zakrzewski**,  
Marketing Operations Manager,  
Thermo Fisher Scientific

### Avoid these pitfalls.

- ✗ Not ensuring buy-in of all relevant teams before demanding new ways of working.
- ✗ Not defining future processes and workflows before implementing new work management tools.
- ✗ Not focusing on integrations among existing tools—such as creative production and digital asset management—to drive desired results.

### Advanced content workflow strategies.

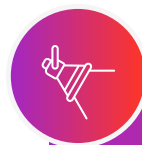
- ✓ Adopt advanced work orchestration techniques, including automated handoffs, AI-enabled brief creation, and automated creation of content variations.
- ✓ Leverage deep operational data and insights to identify process bottlenecks and opportunities to drive efficiency.
- ✓ Identify and pilot how generative AI can be infused in all content-adjacent workflows, such as campaign planning, work management, and publishing content to web, social, and other channels.



### 3. Accelerate creation and scaled production.

Unlock new creative concepts and drive greater scale by minimizing manual tasks and leveraging generative AI and automation capabilities to supercharge creative ideation and execution:

- Identify the most repetitive and time-consuming activities as well as areas of wasted effort—such as resizing images or re-creating versions of the same asset.
- Pilot templates and automation to minimize repetitive, manual work for creatives. Gather feedback to optimize quality and processes before extending across creative teams.
- Facilitate creative collaboration via shared workspaces, especially when sharing work-in-progress assets for peer review.
- Consider how generative AI can help teams create key content types (e.g., still imagery, copy, etc.) while minimizing potential brand safety, licensing, and IP issues. Start with low-risk use cases, such as creative ideation, to begin identifying and testing new technologies.
- Empower non-creative teams to quickly access and edit “last mile” content via easy-to-use, self-service creative and generative AI tools. At the same time, add guardrails to these tools, such as template locking, to ensure content stays on brand.



Content supply chain transformation spotlight: **Prudential Financial**



**1.24x** ROI  
on content



**365%** YoY increase in the  
number of people engaged



**94%** net positive sentiment for  
media and social media mentions

“Being able to self-serve certain capabilities, like cropping an image five different ways, gives our creatives more time to focus on other high-impact work.”

—**Terry Chu**,  
Director and Product Owner  
for Marketing Technology,  
Prudential Financial

### Avoid these pitfalls.

- ✗ Not prioritizing change management and creative controls when introducing AI and automation to the organization.
- ✗ Not baking brand standards and guardrails into creation tools made available to non-creatives.
- ✗ Not having a scalable content management and versioning strategy that keeps pace with the exponential growth of your content.

### Advanced creation and production strategies.

- ✓ Grant teams governed access to all final assets across the enterprise through unified search capabilities across repositories to eliminate wasted effort.
- ✓ Leverage AI to automatically flag and edit assets that do not meet brand and/or regulatory standards, reducing time-consuming rework and review processes.
- ✓ Train your own generative AI model for brand-specific content creation at scale.
- ✓ For global organizations, leverage generative AI and automation to drive localization and personalization efforts simultaneously across formats, such as imagery and copy, driving higher campaign velocity, work management, and publishing content to web, social, and other channels.



## 4. Enable omnichannel distribution and activation.

Seamlessly deliver content to customers and prospects at every stage of their journey by making it easy to find, deliver, and measure:

- Evaluate your current content and asset management strategy for key gaps, including access and storage, tagging, and downstream integrations.
- Centralize final, approved assets in an enterprise-grade asset management solution, as well as related governance and access rules and metadata approach.
- Determine if your existing content data strategy reflects key segments, products, journeys, and touchpoints. If not, design a new asset metadata strategy and roll it out to both internal and external teams.
- Begin planning integrations, where needed, between central asset repositories and downstream tools, such as CMS, commerce, and journey orchestration solutions, as well as upstream systems such as creative and work management tools.



Content supply chain transformation spotlight: **Under Armour**



Increased daily active users and monthly asset downloads from the company's Asset Sharing Portal by over 2x.

"Automatic tagging [of metadata]... saves a lot of time for creative teams as they upload files. And it surfaces many assets that might have gotten lost previously."

— **Ben Snyder**,  
IT Product Owner,  
Under Armour

### Avoid these pitfalls.

- ✗ Not defining a common taxonomy or metadata strategy for content across the enterprise. Without it, new content will not be easily found and used.
- ✗ Not providing the right level of access to assets across all teams, including creatives, to simplify governance.
- ✗ Not having a plan to integrate content management solutions with both creative systems upstream, and activation and measurement systems downstream.

### Advanced activation and distribution strategies.

- ✓ Invest in capabilities that automate metadata tagging upon ingestion from internal or external creative teams
- ✓ Develop and test modular content strategies, essentially componentizing your content to enable reuse across formats and channels.
- ✓ Harness AI to test and optimize content-based experiences at scale that are composed in real-time from content and experience fragments.
- ✓ Measure content performance down to the attribute level to understand which content resonates most with key segments and best supports your business goals. Share these insights with both creative and marketing teams.

# Begin your journey.



"Any organization can make big improvements to their content supply chain. While some of Adobe's enterprise customers do choose to commit to large-scale transformation programs and re-think core organizational structures, many others achieve significant results by taking a more incremental approach." explained Pienknagura.



If you do want to start smaller, we recommend identifying the biggest pain point for your organization—whether that's repetitive production tasks, time-consuming review cycles, lack of asset discoverability, or something else—as well as one or more business units or regional teams that are willing to work on it. Then you can adopt one of strategies two, three, and four of the section above first, and later expand to other areas of opportunity.

## Adobe GenStudio: Content supply chain powered by generative AI

Adobe GenStudio is the most complete solution in the market that streamlines and accelerates the end-to-end content supply chain. GenStudio provides integrated, best-in-class capabilities for teams to plan and orchestrate work, supercharge creative teams with automation and generative AI, empower non-creatives to scale creation in a brand-safe way, and easily find and activate content to optimize performance across channels.

Adobe can take tasks that would normally take hours or days down to minutes, providing speed without any compromise to quality or brand consistency. In fact, we're using it to accelerate our own content supply chain at Adobe, cutting production times by a third in our social media campaigns.

[Learn more about GenStudio](#)

If you're ready to transform your content supply chain, we're ready to help.

Talk to Adobe Professional Services. Our experts have extensive experience building and optimizing functional content supply chains. Contact us now and transform your content processes from creation through activation to become more intelligent, efficient, and valuable.

[Contact us](#)

Sources: [Adobe Digital Trends Report. 2023.](#)

2023 Content Supply Chain Assessment—customer responses to a detailed questionnaire.

### Winning with content supply chain.

Adobe has extensive experience helping organizations transform their content supply chains. "When companies invest in optimizing their content supply chain, we've seen cost savings and productivity improvements in the 30–50% range," shared Lee.

#### T Mobile

**42%** Increase in marketing productivity via automated workflows

#### xfinity

**3X** Target savings in agency fees via integrated suite

#### asics

**30%** Reduction in waste through increased asset re-use



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