



WHITEPAPER

What You Need to Review and Approve Digital Work

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
.....
Your review and approval process is disconnected	4
.....
Feedback is outdated or disconnected	6
.....
The workflow is different for each piece	8
.....
The status of assets is confusing	10
.....
Too much busy work	12
.....
Conclusion	13
.....
Works cited	15
.....





36%

Most marketers have only 36% of their workday to do primary duties.¹

Introduction

If the review and approval process for your digital work is inconsistent, inefficient and, frankly, insufferable—you're not alone:

Most marketers report that after so much time spent repeating work, hunting down approvals, emailing, and attending the wasteful meetings involved in review and approval, they have only 36 percent of their day left to dedicate to their primary duties.¹ That means more late nights, more weekend work, more stress and, ultimately, more burnout for you and your team.

The review and approval process is a necessary one, yes, but it *isn't* necessary that it be such a time-consuming one. In the following pages, you'll find tips and tricks to get your review and approval process running smoothly—which will help ensure only quality and on-brand assets leave the door, increase efficiency, and let you get back to the actual creative work you're in this job to do.

PROBLEM:

Your review and approval process is disconnected

You review content on one platform, then receive approval for it on a completely different platform—and that leaves you with no guardrails about when and where you will receive feedback. This process leads to endless email streams, status meeting notes, in-person drop-ins at your desk, and more.

What does this disconnect actually look like? Maybe you print and distribute hard copies of a digital asset to your reviewers, then spend hours hunting them down for their feedback, which, of course, you then need to move back online to compile the feedback into one place.

Or maybe you steer clear of hard copies, but you email the asset to your reviewers—and more often than not, you have multiple reviewers who are giving feedback all at the same time. This process leaves you with too many email threads and a cluttered inbox to search through once you're ready to compile the feedback you received.

Either way, the disconnect between your review and your approval is a big one—and it's causing bottlenecks and costly project delays. How can you bridge the gap between reviews and approvals?

SOLUTION:

Move your review and approval process onto one system

When your work is digital, it should stay as such throughout the review and approval process. For any reviewers who may be hesitant to move away from hard copies because they prefer to review from home or on the go, ensuring your asset is online, accessible from anywhere at any time, will make this transition a simple one.

If reviewing *and* approving can occur all in the same system, the amount of time you spend

in back-and-forth emails—sending requests for reviews or gathering feedback—can instantly decrease. Sixty-three percent of respondents to a recent survey report spending three or more hours in email *every day*.² It's no question that email is a huge time suck, so centralizing your review and approval process onto one platform or system can give you back the hours in the day that you need to simply get your work done.



63%

63% of marketers spend 3 or more hours in email every day.²

PROBLEM:

Feedback is often outdated or disconnected from other stakeholder comments

You've already moved forward on feedback from one reviewer when you hear back from a stakeholder who, while slower to respond, now wants the exact opposite change. Or maybe you hear from another team about an important update to packaging, but you're already receiving feedback from all your reviewers, meaning their edits are now outdated and no longer relevant. Sound familiar?

Fifty-nine percent of respondents to a recent survey reported their review process requires three or more rounds of revisions.³ The number of revisions you go through because of these inefficiencies—not to mention the time you spend compiling reviewers' notes and deciding which feedback to move forward on—puts you behind schedule and leaves you with no time for other work. But how can you get feedback back on track?

SOLUTION:


Collaborate in real time in the context of the work

Working in email or hard copies means you're likely to receive the same comment about an error from all three reviewers, when just one would have sufficed. Plus, a reviewer who sends their feedback late is likely making 11th hour changes that derail your work.

If you gather feedback on the asset itself, inviting live, time-stamped comments, you're providing a space for effortless collaboration and making a normally convoluted process more visible. Plus, a reviewer can see all other reviewers' comments, so he or she knows what's already been noted—and what important things are still left to be said.

This real-time approach can provide you with live updates and notifications when reviewers leave a comment—in fact, automating hourly, daily, or weekly notifications can keep you in the loop without the hours of work you spend continually checking back in with reviewers.

Ensuring your reviewers have a clear understanding of and access to the conversation happening around your asset provides all parties involved with the full context of work, not only reducing work silos and confusion, but also cutting down on the amount of rework you do because of disconnected reviewers.



Most review and approval processes require 3 or more rounds of revisions.³

PROBLEM:

The workflow is different for each content piece that goes through review and approval

Without standardized processes, keeping track of all the feedback, making sure you get the right approvals—both internal brand and external standards—and including all the necessary stakeholders can be impossible. With your different workflows always resulting in different outcomes, it means your hurdles can vary as drastically as not getting the correct approval, delivering too late, or leaving out a critical stakeholder. But either way,

it always leaves you with more costly delays and more work landing back on your desk.


A Market Trend Watch study says 75 percent of companies report that lack of internal coordination is a major challenge—and being the one tasked with managing that internal coordination without systems in place to help you simply isn't sustainable.⁴ How can you streamline workflows to better support and manage your work?

SOLUTION:

Implement intuitive templates and workflows for all types of content

Even if the work you do stays fairly consistent across asset types, it can feel like you're forced to reinvent the wheel each time a piece of content has to get approved. That's why one major solution is templates: Instead of repeating the same work time and again, creating templates that are intuitive and readily customizable allow you to skip over all the repeatable steps of your work, populating information automatically and cutting down on unnecessary work for all your most common projects.

Another solution is to automate your workflows for all assets that need review and approval. These workflows can automatically send your asset to the right reviewers, in the right order. You don't need to keep track of which asset needs which approval—it's already taken care of for you. This, in conjunction with intuitive templates, will help your reviewers start to feel familiar and comfortable with your review requests, leading to faster turn-around time and easier work for them and for you.



75%

75% of companies face internal coordination problems.⁴

PROBLEM:

You're never sure what the status is of assets in the review and approval process

"Have all the appropriate people reviewed?" "Have I not heard back from the stakeholder because he has no comments, or because he hasn't even looked yet?" "Did he see my 'bumping this to the top of your inbox' reminder email, or should I send another?"

These are all questions you've surely asked yourself when waiting on the feedback you need to get your assets approved and out the door. It can be an excruciatingly long process—and that's just for one

reviewer: 47 percent of companies have more than four people involved in review and approval.⁵

You spend hours status-tracking, wondering whether you should adjust product timeline, deciding if you should adjust the budget to include more revisions and work, trying to pinpoint where the bottleneck that's slowing the process down is originating and more. How do you get a better view into the status of your review and approval process?

SOLUTION:

Implement an online proofing solution that gives you real-time data on proof status

This kind of solution lets you see which reviewers have opened the proof and when, all their feedback in accessible comments and whether or not the asset has been reviewed or approved.

If you're still waiting on feedback from reviewers, an online proofing solution automates reminder emails, taking the responsibility off your plate to hunt them down with reminders to review content on time.

The visibility a proofing solution brings helps you identify where any bottlenecks are happening—and

where you need to put some extra pressure or send extra resources in order to ensure the work gets done on time. You also have a significant advantage when it comes to identifying project timeline and addressing any possible setbacks before those setbacks can derail your project. This real-time view into the status of your asset can save you hours of unnecessary work and give you peace of mind knowing that all the right reviewers have easy access to your asset.



47%

47% of companies have more than 4 people involved in review and approval.⁵

PROBLEM:

There is simply too much busy work just to get assets out the door

Most creatives spend about 20 percent of their time in meetings, reporting that almost half of those meetings are a waste of time.⁶ These meetings interrupt your concentration, cause a roadblock for your creativity and take away work hours that you end up being forced to make up over late nights and weekends.

It's not just status meetings stalling your work: The amount of time and energy you put into

email routing just to hassle reviewers to send you their feedback makes the review and approval process one of the biggest time sucks in your day. For 40 percent of marketers, dealing with email is one of the biggest obstacles to getting work done.⁷ The worst part? You know it doesn't *have* to be this painful. But how do you tackle so many disparate, ad-hoc, busy-work inefficiencies?

SOLUTION:

Get a proofing tool that can automate email routing, communications, and approval tracking for you

The best way to increase speed of delivery time is by eliminating the busy work altogether. If status meetings are meant to update everyone involved in the asset, then provide those parties with access to a tool where the asset itself, plus all coordinating comments and related information, lives online. Reviewers, stakeholders and you can skip status meetings entirely by simply looking at the asset online—seeing any questions, comments, and updates right there in the digital proof.

Beyond eliminating wasteful meetings, a proofing tool centralizes all conversations happening, in real time, about the asset. That means you can stop chasing down stakeholders in hallways and sending email reminders over and over again to reviewers. Your reviews and approvals can live online, in one location, accessible for everyone involved, so no one needs to stop by your desk asking about deadlines or delivery dates—it's all in the tool. With busy work and interruptions out of the picture, you can get back to delivering quality content on time and within budget.



40%

40% of marketers say email is one of their biggest work obstacles.⁷

Conclusion

Of course, implementing the visibility, collaborative work, and efficiency your review and approval process has been lacking won't happen overnight—but armed with the solutions to your review and approval problems, you can start getting your digital work back on track.

What does that mean for you? You're on your way to getting reviewers who know what's required of them, feedback that's in line with your assets' goals and standards, and workflows that run like well oiled machines—leaving you with less review and approval pain and more time to do the work you're in this business to do.

Review and approve digital work quickly and consistently with Workfront

Review and approve quality work quickly with collaborative, streamlined workflows inside a single system. Workfront gives you all the features you need to automate the entire lifecycle of work—including reviewing and approving content—so you spend less time tracking down approvals and status updates and more time focusing on the work you love. Use Workfront to review and approve content faster and easier than ever before. You'll be able to:

- Save time by reviewing assets in the same easy-to-use system that manages your team's work
- Ensure global brand consistency across all teams, even large enterprises or remote contributors
- Accelerate and streamline the asset approval process with automated workflows and mobile review and approval
- Eliminate costly compliance and brand errors due to low-quality work
- Collaborate and view contextualized feedback in real-time within the related project

workfront.com/review

Works cited

1. The State of Marketing Work 2015. Workfront, 2015.
2. A Day in the Life of a Marketer. Workfront, 2014.
3. The Good, The Bad and The Non-Compliant. Workfront, 2017.
4. Marketing Trend Watch: Planning Edition. Marketo, 2014.
5. The Marketing Dilemma: Managing Content, Complexity, and Compliance. Workfront, 2015.
6. The State of Marketing Work 2015. Workfront, 2015.
7. Ibid.



Copyright © 2016-2017 Workfront, Inc. All rights reserved.
workfront.com

18315748