

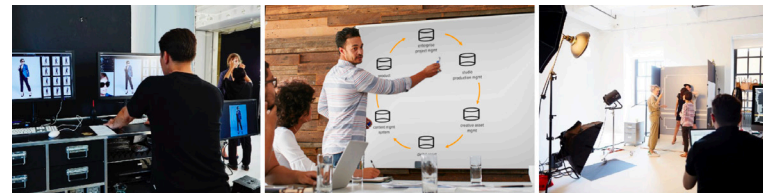
FIVE ESSENTIALS OF WORLD-CLASS CREATIVE OPERATIONS

PRODUCTIVITY

CREATIVE PRODUCTION IS
GROWING AND **CHANGING** RAPIDLY,
BUT IN MANY ORGANIZATIONS
INEFFICIENT PROCESSES ARE
CRIPPLING PRODUCTIVITY

Despite rapid evolution of technology, nearly every creative professional working today struggles to keep up with a deluge of work and projects. In part, the pressure is building because volume is increasing while timeframes are shrinking. Many creatives feel the process is controlling them and not the other way around.

There are a wide range of technology solutions available to help, but in many organizations the investment in technology hasn't been rapid enough. Trends like cloud storage and collaboration are becoming priorities in the C-suite, which helps drive the urgency to



automate. But in the real-world, the process of identifying, evaluating, acquiring, and then deeply integrating new platforms takes a long time. Further complicating the process is the fact that existing workflows have often been in place for years or even decades, and the complexities of human process change can slow down technology adoption. No matter how you pursue it, change management of this type is hard.

***So how can you **REGAIN CONTROL?**
(and maybe maintain your sanity?)***

The key is to start by getting the essentials right. It's not necessary to fix or change everything at once. Implement core techniques and technologies – the ones that have been proven to simplify the process and support operations taking place at scale. Adding even one or two key technology components, or implementing just a few 'best practices' can help most organizations to streamline operations enough to see a dramatic jump in productivity. And maybe more importantly, these changes can make a meaningful impact in the lives of the creative operations professionals who are being asked to deliver results every day.





We've been working with leading creative operations teams for many years, and recommend the five tasks below as 'start here' options to streamlining and enhancing the productivity of your creative operations. These are places where we've repeatedly seen a little effort deliver dramatic improvements.

1 CENTRALIZE ASSETS

IN A SINGLE TRUSTWORTHY REPOSITORY

The single largest impact you can have on your organization's creative operations productivity is the establishment of a single, centralized (ideally cloud-based) digital asset repository. This one change completely alters the way your team stores, manipulates, collaborates, searches, retrieves, tracks, secures, and shares photos, videos, PDFs and other files.

The first impact your entire organization will notice is the sense of clarity that will emerge as soon as the process of transferring historical archives into the central storage location is complete. The constant questions and uncertainty about "where the latest version is" and "where those files are" will be gone. A simple browse or search becomes the path to find any and all files – from anywhere and at any time. In this new world everything anyone needs to access is always

just a search or a click away. It will make things easier when someone needs to grab the approved final version of an image, when someone needs to quickly browse through every shot taken on an old shoot, or when you need to check the metadata on a certain photo or video.

The largest benefit may be in time saved – as it will never again take hours or even days to figure out where something is, or who has it hidden on a hard drive beneath their desk. Without that delay, projects move along and deadlines get hit rather than missed.

Another potential win is mobility: You can now access years of archives right from your phone or tablet, and when you find the file you were thinking of, you can send it along to anyone with just a click. This kind of always-at-your-

fingertips access to your library transforms the value of your entire photo and video library. Many companies find that the number of mistakes throughout the creative production process drops when a central archive is created, due both to how much easier it is to find the exact right version of any image when it's needed, and because many of these platforms offer some form of digital rights management which can communicate and enforce important rules or contractual obligations.

There are other benefits too, but avoiding mistakes, gaining universal access, saving time, and simplifying the life of everyone touching your creative operations make it easy to see why establishing a single digital home for all of your digital assets should be considered your first step towards improving the productivity of your creative operations.

2 SIMPLIFY REVIEW & APPROVAL

Review and approval allows work to move forward at every step throughout a creative process. It starts when hundreds or thousands of original images (or hours of original footage) must be filtered down to the working selects, continues through markup and the editing process, and doesn't end until a final asset and the project itself are approved for release.

Review and approval is often a bottleneck because it requires

input from various team members, including art directors, production managers, PR, marketing, and brand managers, who are not always available or physically at the same location. It can be hard to get assets into the hands of reviewers, and hard to collect feedback from people who are offering input to the final decision makers. The resulting delays can frustrate team members, anger management, and cause deadlines to be missed.



A good review and approval process/system should address the needs of both reviewers, who are looking for simplicity, mobility, precision, notifications, reminders, and managers, who are looking for tracking, reporting, accuracy and flexibility.

An automated digital review and approval system moves assets

from capture to production faster – across all media including print, ecomm and digital. This accelerated output gives brands more results from their creative budgets, saves substantial time for each person involved in the creative process, and can significantly reduce total production time, saving hours, days or in some cases even weeks.



A centralized, online review and approval solution that allows all stakeholders to easily access digital assets from anywhere in order to quickly review them and share ratings and comments.



An approval process that enables clear and direct feedback from reviewers based on whichever form of approval (selects, stars, colors, etc.) the organization favors, and a tracking and notifications system that keeps everyone informed of all feedback and approvals and the status of every asset.



The ability to review, comment, and process images from anywhere: desktop, iOS, or any mobile web browser, which keeps the processes moving even when key participants are themselves on the move.



Clear results reporting that brings together all the input and voices into a structured format where everyone who needs to can access and process the input so the process can drive forward.

3 STREAMLINE AND SUPPORT COLLABORATION



Creative projects today involve a lot of different people, often in different locations, playing various roles over the life of the project. All of them are interacting with the same photos or video assets, sometimes working together or going back and forth to share opinions, ideas or edits. Encouraging and supporting efficient moments and sequences of collaboration among your team has a huge impact on improving results, timeliness, and the satisfaction levels of those on the team.

Without dedicated collaboration tools, or a workflow platform that supports collaboration, team members are usually forced to share by exchanging hundreds of emails, Slack messages, or phone calls – or sitting through an endless series of meetings for each execution. The cumulative toll of all these interactions adds time and cost to the creative process and introduces a lot of room for error. Communications within your team are difficult, and when there are a large number of partner vendors, such as

photographers, retouchers or print vendors, the problem is exacerbated. Bottlenecks and costly delays appear everywhere along the workflow.

Far better is to have a creative workflow solution that allows everyone involved in a project to review, annotate and markup creative content, or send targeted messages directly to anyone on the team from within the system. By creating a single point of collaboration everyone stays on the same page. Ideally, notifications alert users when new comments or feedback are available, either for them personally or regarding an image that they're currently monitoring.

Built-in messaging and collaboration tools reduce friction because all communications take place directly within the same interface as basic file access and sharing, and quality improves because the full history of issues and ideas relating to every file is saved and forever available anytime anyone accesses the file – an image-related knowledge base is built as you work.

4 SECURITY IS A FEATURE



Creative operations serves the needs of creative and marketing teams. But today those needs include a serious consideration for security. As people and systems have become distributed, security issues and potential for problems have grown dramatically. The trick is to balance the process and efficiency the creative team desires against the limitations and barriers necessary to protect files from winding up in places where they shouldn't.

The default methods employed by many organizations are inherently insecure – particularly consumerbased platforms that weren't built for enterprise security, unsecure FTP servers, files distributed via personal emails, and other ad-hoc methods used every day in organizations large and small. These tools emphasize convenience but have endless ways in which they can leak data or even become compromised.

The storage and access policies for any company today must ensure that both current and historical electronic files are protected from unauthorized access.

This requires a security-centric creative workflow with all of the following capabilities:



- A role-based central system of user permissions, that specifies access and download rights as well as other related authorizations and protections.
- The ability to define limits on download resolutions, and to require default or custom watermarking on any/all downloaded images.
- Audit logs and other process controls that allow retroactive review of user activity and reports of all open sharing activity.
- Technical security, including encryption, code audited and validated by a top security firm and third-party security certification.
- A physically secure data center, with regular backups and tapes stored in vaults.

Equally important, is that once a secure creative workflow solution has been established, the teams eliminate the use of uncontrolled and unapproved storage and sharing tools which can often pervade the organization even without any IT support or internal management awareness.

5 PROTECT

YOUR DIGITAL ASSET RIGHTS

There are both business and legal reasons why it's vital to ensure that only the latest and approved digital assets are always used. As the volume of content has increased, so has the number of different sources where assets originate and the diversity of different publishing destinations. Asset rights management is a set of technologies and protocols that assist creative operations professionals in managing this complicated process – ensuring that the process isn't left as the responsibility of individual employees, who sometimes have only a partial knowledge of the rights rules and limitations.

Asset Rights or Model Rights errors can upset suppliers, artists or talent and impose unnecessary legal costs on the company. For example, settling a copyright infringement claim for an unlicensed photo will cost many times the expense of a standard license.

When asset rights management is a part of a creative workflow solution, each image or video is defined to have specifically limited rights and expirations:

- **After the expiration date (photographer's or model usage for example):**
Users should be able to view the photo or video in the system, but not export it or use it for production.
- **Upon expiration of rights for a specific asset:**
Employees should be able to easily request the right to use the asset by a simple request form built in the system, managed by the asset rights admin.



With technology that monitors and administers asset rights, your company avoids legal risk and the potentially significant expense of non-compliance. This also can save time and improve the overall quality of your deliverables by helping you to avoid the accidental use of expired assets.

CONCLUSION

Creative operations has to focus on deliverables, and the urgent flood of current projects often puts expedience ahead of long term productivity. But efficiency and long term productivity (not to mention sanity) are achieved in part by understanding and gaining control of the most essential aspects of creative production: **file storage, review and approval, collaboration, security and rights protection.**

These and other important improvements are largely achieved with the addition of

new technology solutions into the creative production process. Software has the capability to manage the scale and layer on the communication and security capabilities that were nice to have five years ago but are absolutely vital today. Too many large creative operations teams are still operating without the technical and procedural advances that enable their competitors to accelerate schedules and cut costs. It's the kind of disadvantage that takes a toll on an organization and its people.

Fortunately solutions do not have to be elaborate or expensive. There are numerous technologies and workflow solutions at a range of price points that can be selected and adopted to handle these key issues. Forward-thinking companies and professionals should match their creative production needs with not only the right core capabilities but also an appropriate set of enterprise-grade features to achieve truly world class creative operations.

ABOUT GLOBALEDIT

Since 2003, globaledit has been a trusted partner to major brands in retail, fashion, health & beauty, entertainment, and eCommerce. Our Creative Asset Management platform creates efficiencies in photo production workflows and processes, making it an essential collaboration platform for creatives.

Globaledit is part of the CoCreativ collective. CoCreativ is the world's first Creative CX Studio Network dedicated to providing scalable creative solutions through CX strategy, creativity, and execution. We serve the industry, along with their brands and agencies, by delivering end-to-end CX solutions to create and run programs at scale, more efficiently. Learn more about our thinking for digital commerce and the role of CX.

KEY BENEFITS OF GLOBALEDIT



ACCELERATE
PRODUCTION



STREAMLINE
PROCESSES



IMPROVE
COLLABORATION



REMOVE
ROADBLOCKS



ENHANCE
TIME-TO-SITE

LEARN MORE ABOUT
THESE BENEFITS