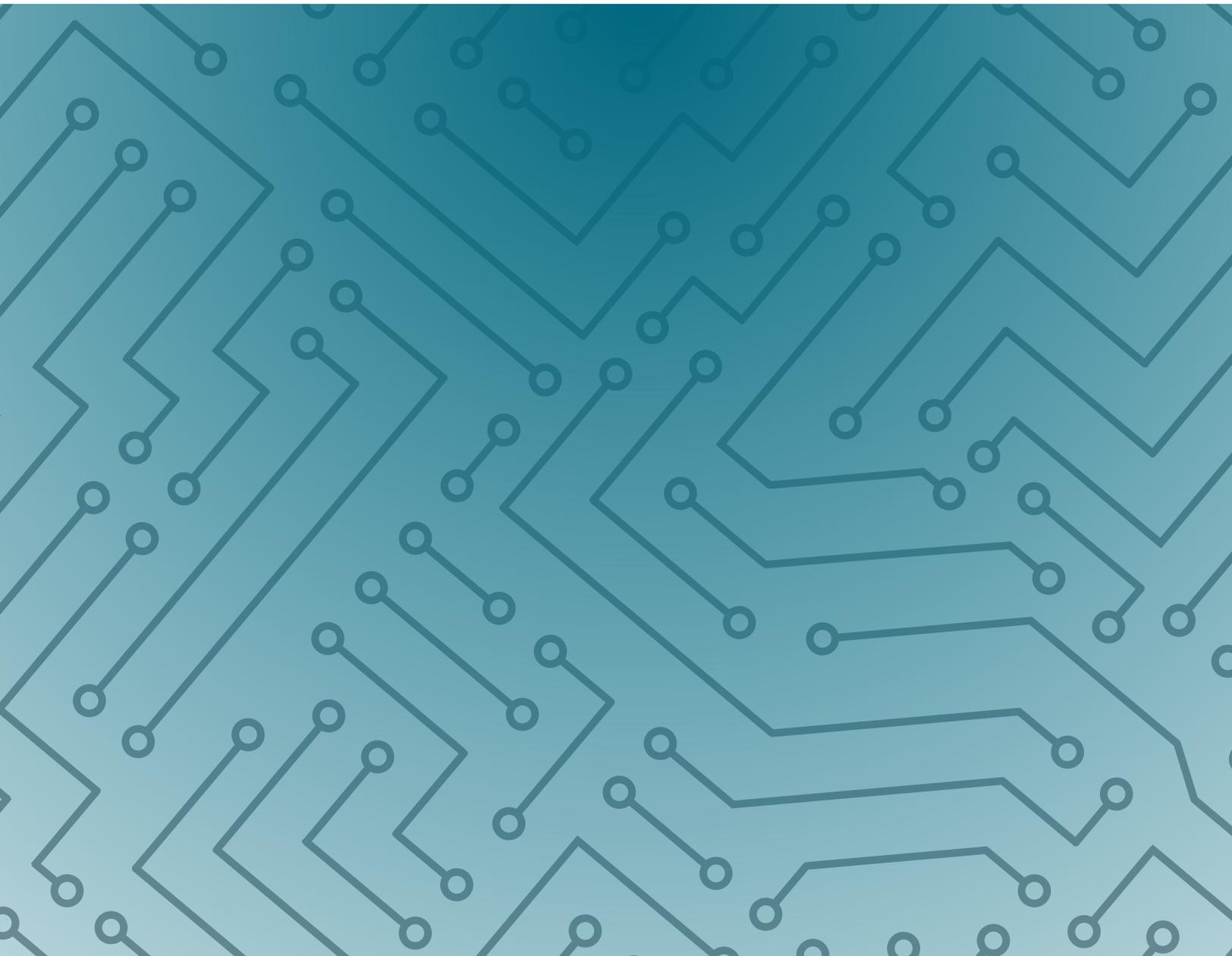


THE SECRET TO OPTIMIZING PRODUCTION WORKFLOWS





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An essential part of any effective content marketing strategy is the ability to create and deliver your message in a consistent and timely manner. Consumers are constantly bombarded by marketing messages in multiple channels, and their attention span is fleeting, to say the least. Therefore, it's critical that brands deliver content that's timely, hitting customers' inboxes, social news feeds, mailboxes, etc., when they're most likely to be interested and ready to take action.

However, that's easier said than done when it currently takes you months to produce a catalog, weeks to put together an email campaign, and days to get a social media or blog post just right. Keep in mind that it requires process, time, money and labor to produce content, so the more efficiently it can be done, the better it is for your business. An automated workflow tool, integrated with the production environment, can go a long way to help marketers create, manage and distribute content.

LOOK BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

Before looking at how an automated workflow tool can help businesses make their production processes more efficient, let's examine the process most brands are currently using to produce and distribute content. The typical content workflow includes the following tasks:

- idea generation/brainstorm;
- outline;
- write;
- review;
- edit;
- approve;
- publish;
- distribute; and
- measure.

The amount of people and/or teams involved in the various stages of this collection of tasks often impacts its complexity. Depending on the organization, those people can include content strategists, copywriters, graphic designers, UX specialists, production managers, web developers/IT, and others. Complicating matters is that many organizations are operating with disparate systems that offer little information into what stage a project is at in the workflow, what needs to be accomplished and by whom, and to what team or person does the project go next.

Common production problems include not all employees having access to the same systems, too many systems in use, communication challenges derived from undefined roles and responsibilities within the system, a lack of a distribution strategy for when content is created, to name just a few. These issues add up to time and money needlessly spent on completing projects.

HOW AN AUTOMATED WORKFLOW TOOL CAN HELP

Frustrated by the amount of time and effort it takes to create content — hindered by an inefficient or in many cases nonexistent workflow — many brands choose to give up. Or if they are producing content, they're not doing so on a consistent enough basis to meet the needs and wants of their customers. According to the Aberdeen Group, 68 percent of marketers are unable to create enough content to satiate their audience.

The good news is there's a tool that can help. An automated workflow offers marketers a platform for print and digital production that can identify each person's connected relationship to defined tasks in the production process. A customized production workflow can be created and implemented, enabling everyone working on a project to get on the same page. The right workflow design will manage content creation from idea to distribution, including tasks, deliveries, versions, mutations and approvals along the way. Communication between co-workers and teams is made easier, speeding the time it takes to move tasks from one person to another. Combine this powerful tool with an integrated content management system (ICMS), and the competitive advantages start to steamroll and come together in a crescendo.

Without an ICMS, a company's content is often stored in multiple systems simultaneously, which leads to redundancy and increases the chances for errors because users don't know which system has the most current version of an asset. Furthermore, metadata attributes (e.g., categories, keyword tags) for those assets must be continuously synchronized across the multiple systems. An ICMS addresses these issues by having the content live in a single repository, eliminating the need for time-consuming tasks of searching, sharing and reusing content.

An ICMS with a flexible workflow component is able to guide a production process through its steps, tasks and decisions in an automated fashion, while reporting on progress. This holds true for the workflow of each individual project, which often changes depending on the type of content being produced (e.g., a print catalog vs. a blog post) and the timeline for when it needs to be completed. Creating an 80-page catalog that involves the input of a company's merchants, marketers, copywriters, designers, production managers, etc., is going to necessitate a workflow that's much more complex than one required for a single product update on a web page. The benefit of an automated workflow as a component of an ICMS is that each task can be managed more efficiently from the start, generating timely content that's more likely to drive conversions.

As content continues to be a bigger motivating factor in consumers' purchase decisions, marketers need to invest in the tools needed to produce it on a timely and consistent basis. According to PQ Media's Global Content Marketing Forecast 2017, global content marketing revenues grew 14 percent in 2016 to \$28.1 billion, and the medium is poised for 14 percent growth again this year. Ensure your company gets its piece of that \$30 billion-plus pie by investing in an ICMS that has an automated workflow component as an integral part of the solution.

ABOUT US

Established in 1987, WAVE is an engineering company that advances the management and distribution of marketing content through its MediaBank application for some of the largest marketers, manufacturers, advertisers, retailers and publishers in the world. MediaBank, an ensemble of powerful modules providing an organized source for your creative content, helps distribute this valuable information across various channels, including web, print, multimedia, email, etc. It's an all-in-one solution that offers an operational synergy impossible to achieve when employing multiple disparate systems. Experience the comfort of working with an innovative partner that understands that perspiration is the best way to create inspiration. Learn more at www.wavecorp.com.



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