

Supercharge Your Creative Team's Productivity by Harnessing Technology

When you take time to evaluate your team's creative review process and implement solutions to make it smoother, faster and cleaner, the payoff can be great.

WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT?

If your mind swirls with thoughts of how you and your team will produce yet another program to keep up with ever-expanding new platforms and formats, especially in digital, you're not alone.

Your problem is plain and simple: There's a bigger need for more creative content, and your existing team might not be equipped to handle that right now. You need more resources, more time to adapt to change and greater efficiency in your creative process to get it all done.

Indeed, resourcing is the greatest challenge for 53 percent of creative leaders and in-house agencies, according to survey results published in the *2018 In-House Creative Industry Report* coproduced by Cella and The Boss Group. Dealing with client behaviors—requesting too many revisions, not allotting ample time to complete work in a quality manner—is a challenge for 71 percent of respondents.

In addition, your team sizes aren't increasing as your workload grows. Sixty percent of creative leaders say they'll maintain their full-time employee headcount through 2018, according to the report.

Hightail's *2017 State of Creative Collaboration* survey returned similar sentiments. Of the 1,040 respondents, 66 percent said they feel that campaigns and new programs don't get out as fast as they need to, and 83 percent indicated their company's review and feedback process takes longer than expected. Yet less than half say their company has technology in place to ease these headaches.

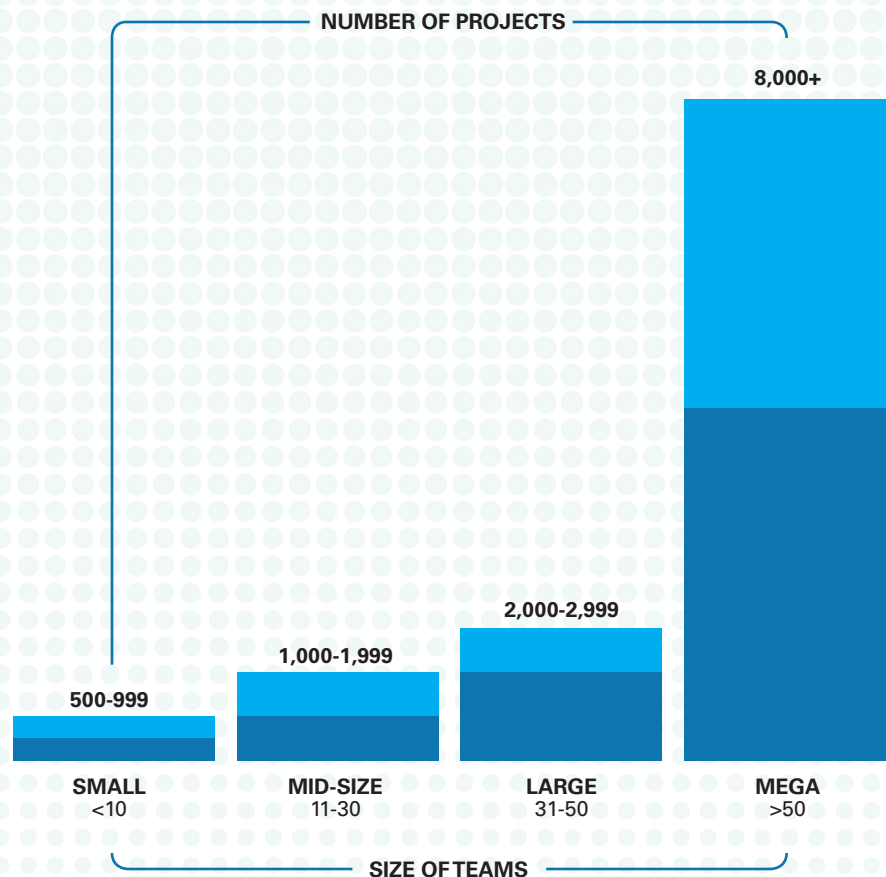
To address all of these challenges, many creative leaders turn to digital asset management (DAM) solutions. DAM is only one part of the answer, however. You first should consider how creative is made, starting with examining your creative review process—which is probably taking up a lot more time than you think.

At least **50 PERCENT** of creative leaders cited in the *2018 In-House Creative Industry Report* say their teams are tasked with the following:

GRAPHIC DESIGN
PRODUCTION DESIGN
INFOGRAPHICS
PHOTOGRAPHY
POWERPOINT
BRAND MANAGEMENT
VIDEO PRODUCTION
PRINT PROCUREMENT
COPYWRITING
ACCOUNT/PROJECT MANAGEMENT
COPYEDITING
MARKETING/COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
PROOFREADING
ETC. ETC. ETC.

Not only is the diversity of your creative team's responsibilities overwhelming. So, too, is the volume of projects with which you're tasked to complete.

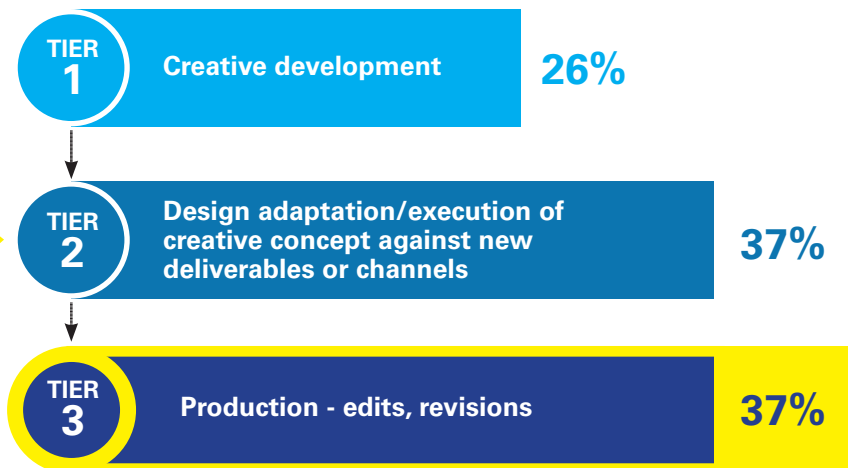
These are the average number of projects worked on in 2017 broken down by team size, according to the report:



THE MOST SURPRISING FINDING

Teams are spending as much time on edits and revisions to creative projects as they are designing and developing those assets. It's not just a time problem, either: It's also a financial burden. The 2017 Hightail survey found that 62 percent of respondents feel that money is being wasted as a result of spending additional time and resources addressing miscommunication and misunderstandings in the creative review process.

HOW THE WORK BREAKS DOWN



THE GOOD NEWS

You can conquer these numbers, take back your team's time and become a master tactician (à la Captain America) by understanding how to address productivity challenges with two technology tools: creative review software and DAM solutions. Take a look.

CREATIVE REVIEW SOFTWARE

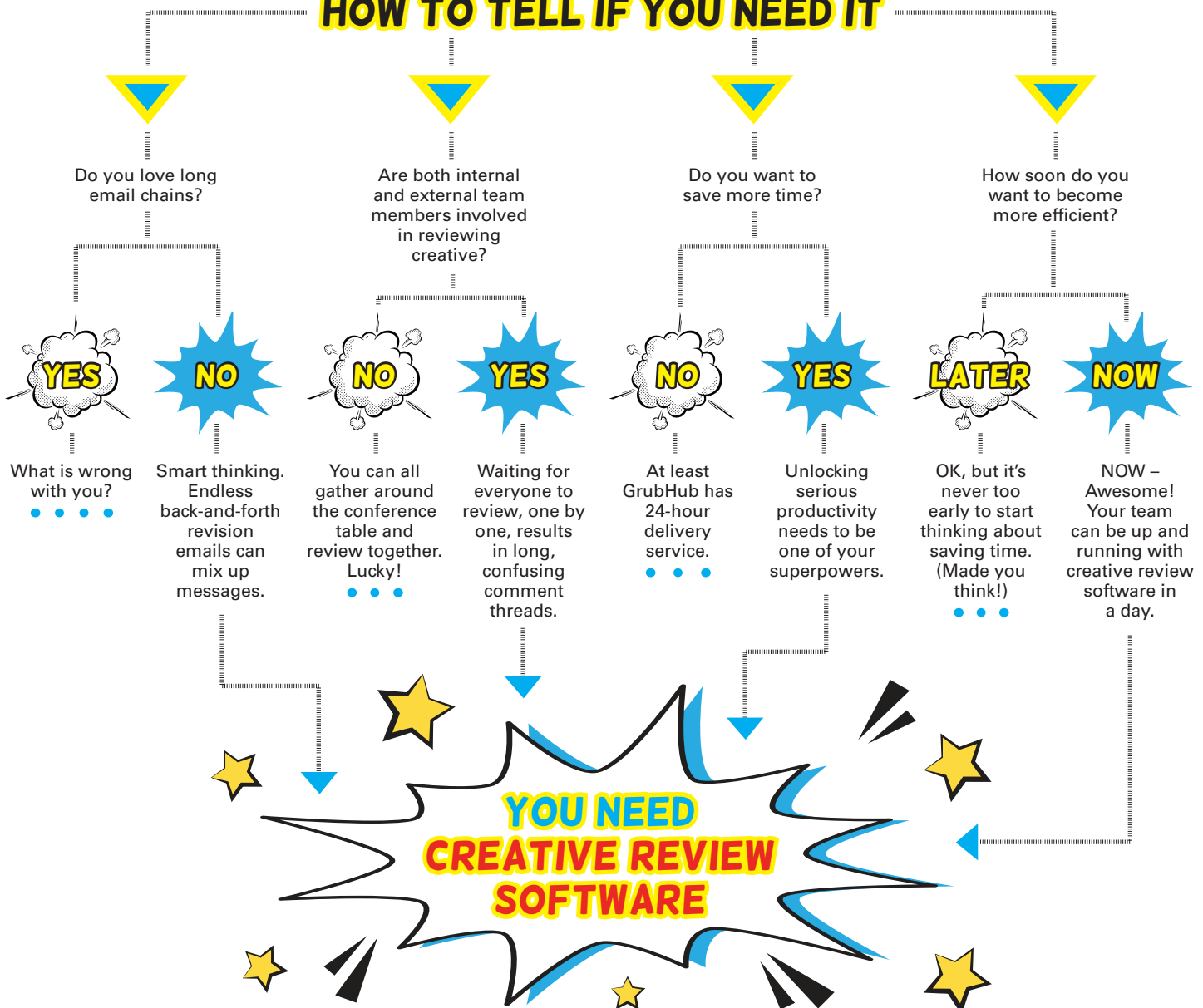
WHAT IT IS

Also known as creative collaboration software, creative review software is a tool designed to streamline the process of creative reviews and approvals.

WHAT IT DOES

Creative review software helps revision rounds close faster, helps teams get (and stay) on the same page when it comes to edits, and greatly improves efficiency of communication—allowing you to achieve a quality product in less time.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU NEED IT



DAM SOLUTION

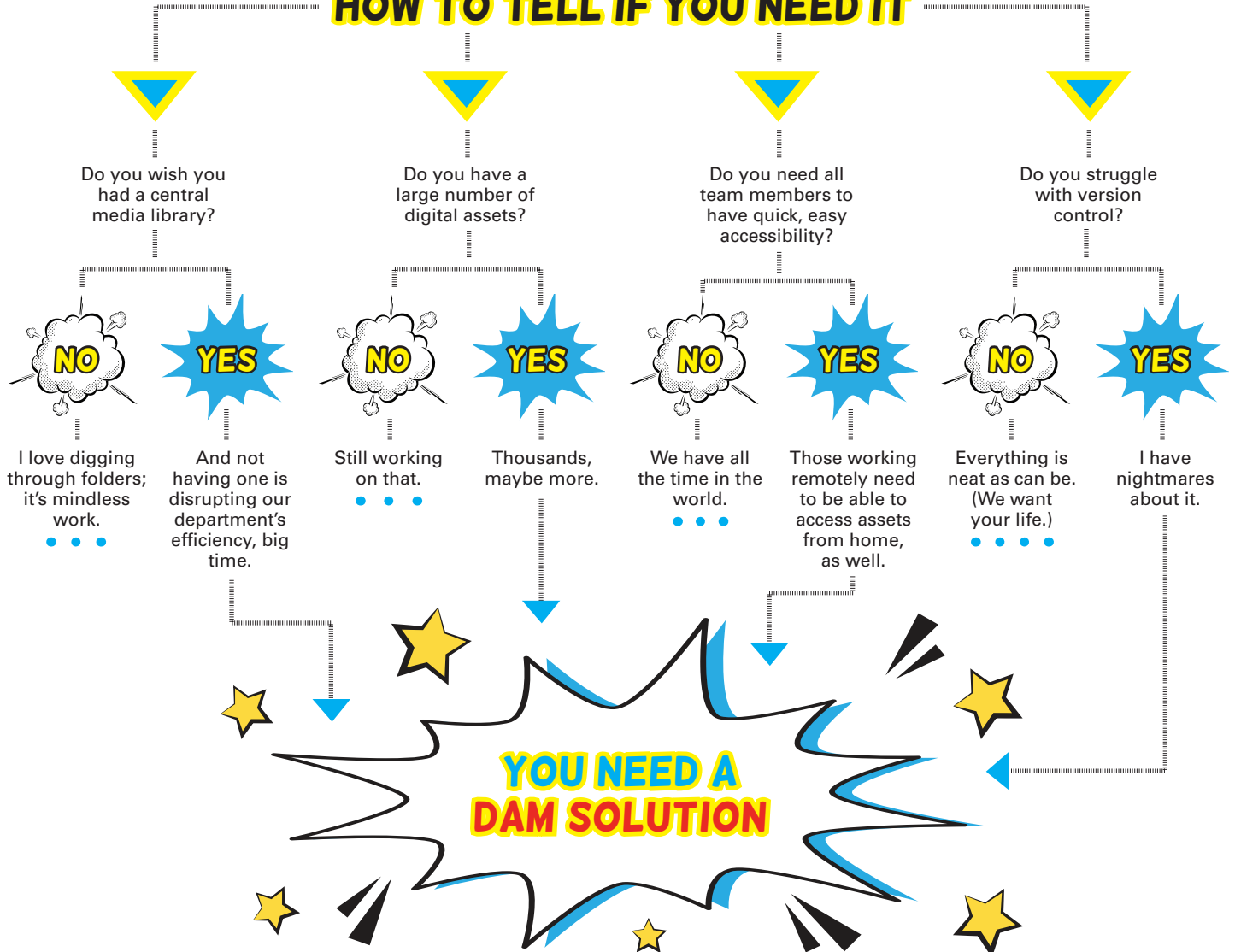
WHAT IT IS

A digital asset management solution is a consolidated asset repository for marketing, branding, video assets, ecommerce and global distribution. Think of it as a tool for corralling and taking control of thousands of media assets (photos, videos, PDFs, graphics, animations and more) scattered across various siloed locations.

WHAT IT DOES

A DAM solution allows reuse and repurposing of creative assets, optimizes brand consistency, improves visibility and insight, maximizes asset utilization, improves customer experience, reduces agency fees, accelerates time to market and increases return on marketing investment.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU NEED IT



BETTER TOGETHER

Like Batman and Robin, creative review software and DAM solutions can operate independently of one another, but they are better together. Creative teams have already acknowledged ways that technology can help manage projects, with about 33 percent currently using a visual project management tool, according to the *2018 In-House Creative Industry Report*.

The general process looks like this:

- A project is created, milestones are set.
- Tasks are assigned to individuals to be completed by specific dates.
- The software tracks the process through all stages, with drafts needing approval/feedback being sent for review at appropriate times.

What most project management software on its own does not do, however, is allow for real-time collaboration and feedback among all parties during the review stage—as in, it falls short of hosting discussion around creative in a string of comments. Unless each of the creative reviewers provides very organized and specific feedback to each point, feedback can become vague, rendering the tool about as effective as long email chains.

DAMs are often the first place companies look when they're focusing on improving productivity, but these take time to roll out because they require building a system of record. Creative review software, on the other hand, is more turnkey—once you've made a decision on which option is best, you can start using it with your team, clients and stakeholders in as little as one day. Though it can be quick and easy to implement, creative review software will only be successful in improving the process if you, as creative team leader, take the necessary steps to get all parties on board.

However, even the most expertly designed creative review process is only effective if your team willingly adopts it. With that in mind, here's what to consider.

EVALUATE YOUR NEEDS.

Review the most pressing pain points of your team and pinpoint where, exactly, your creative process and workflow break down

so you can understand the functionality you'll need in a solution—whether that's creative review software, DAM or both.

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD.

Regardless of job titles, creative review software and DAMs can—and should—be used by everyone on your team, from a marketing assistant to a freelancer to your creative director and the CMO. Find out what each team cares about most and consider that as you implement a solution. Making them feel like they're part of the process will help ensure adoption.

FRATERNIZE WITH STAKEHOLDERS.

Make water cooler talk with people from other key departments like IT. Getting buy-in as you prepare to implement a solution will be easier if you build enthusiasm (and display it yourself) early on.

AVOID OVERCOMPLICATED SYSTEMS.

If a system is counterintuitive or takes more than a few minutes to explain, people aren't going to use it. The experience with your solution should be as simple to use as other technologies they use on a daily basis.

USE THEIR TERMS.

As you explain specific benefits of the new solution to each team, avoid generic terminology and focus on what's most relevant to them and how it will improve their workflow.

CHOOSE CHAMPIONS.

Just like brands find success with ambassadors, you can be successful with implementing a new technology if you appoint a "change champion" for each team who will sing its praises because he or she has experienced its benefits first-hand.

GET FEEDBACK.

If you've learned anything through the process of vetting creative review software and DAMs, it's that finding an effective way to get feedback and efficiently revise a project based on that is important. Likewise, ask your teams what they think a few days or weeks after implementation. It's key to identify issues in the process and address them early on to avoid discouragement (and abandonment of the product or products) later.

IN SUMMARY

When you're looking for a better way to share multimedia files, manage your creative team's output and collaborate on revisions in real time, creative review software, or creative collaboration software, is an effective, efficient, affordable solution that you can put into practice immediately. To infinity, and beyond!

This eBook is brought to you by OpenText Hightail. Hightail is purpose-built to help creative teams streamline the creative review and approval process in one easy to use solution. Learn more about Hightail at hightail.com/creative-collaboration.