# FORRESTER®

# Improve Creative Speed, Quality, And Relevancy With Automation

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# How Digital Advertisers Can Use Automation To Improve Their Creative Workflows

Brands today struggle to produce content and advertising on time and at scale - primarily due to archaic ways of working and the ever-increasing number of screens, channels, and formats. Speed and efficiency are thus critical to business success. Brands can differentiate themselves in a competitive market by creating a culture focused on agility and efficiency, allowing creative to be produced at scale and designed to match local consumer expectations and messaging needs. But changing culture and ways of working can be difficult; to get started, firms must completely reinvent and automate process, workflow, and technology. Businesses that can improve their production processes and produce relevant content will stand out and better win, serve, and retain customers.

## Key Findings

Firms are focused on improving their creative processes and look to automation to meet these goals.

However, firms experience a multitude of technology and process challenges and an overarching struggle with speed and relevancy in production that hinders their success.

Firms can utilize an automation platform to address these challenges and ultimately improve the speed, quality, and relevancy of their digital content.

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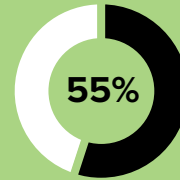## Firms Are Focusing On Improving Creative Processes

Today's consumers are savvy and more inclined to make thoughtful decisions than ever before. This poses a big question to brands: How can they adjust their creative strategies to remain attractive to today's consumer? One of the ways advertisers have started to shift toward a more singular customer focus is through a concentration on their digital advertising creative processes to ensure they remain relevant across regions, languages, channels, and needs, without sacrificing quality of content or speed of creation.

Over the next year, firms are planning to refine their creative processes by improving relevancy, efficiency, and quality.
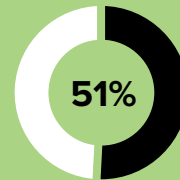
**What are your organization's digital advertising creative goals over the next year?**
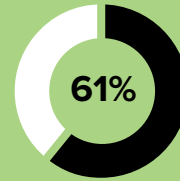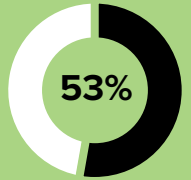
**61%** Improve creative relevancy

**58%** Improve process/workflow efficiency in creative

**55%** Scale creative output without increasing production costs

**53%** Improve digital advertising creative performance

**51%** Improve creative quality

Base: 224 digital advertising decision makers
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Celtra, December 2019
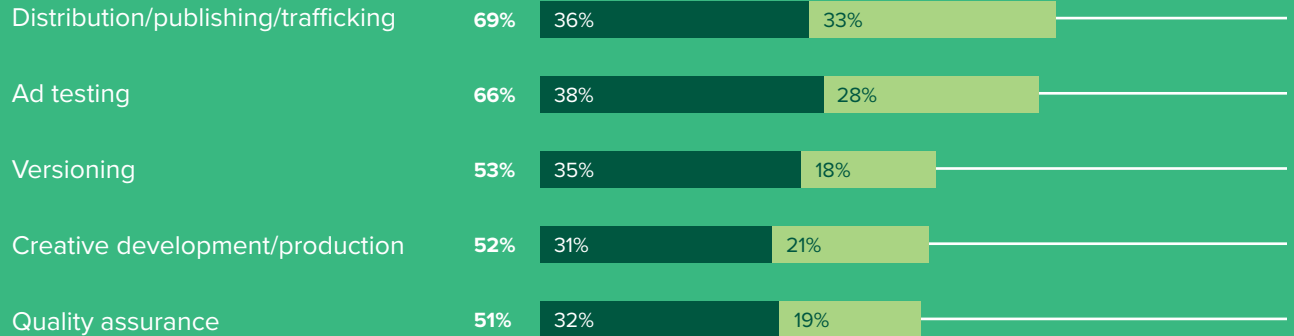
# Firms Automate Key Processes

Automation can take many forms in digital advertising and creative, from previewing translated advertisements to generation of multiple advertisements from a single template. Such automation can positively impact relevance of ads, speed of creation, and cost. Our study found that many firms are in the early stages of automation and are starting to automate some of the core production processes.

However, few processes are completely automated. The most commonly automated tasks are distribution/ publishing, ad testing, and creative development, but these are only partially automated today. While firms have started to understand the importance of automation, very few have begun putting it fully into practice, leading to a huge area of opportunity for brands to automate more core processes.

**How would you rank your current level of automation in digital advertising creative production efforts?**

● Mostly automated
● Completely automated

| | | Mostly automated | Completely automated |
|---|---|---|---|
| Distribution/publishing/trafficking | 69% | 36% | 33% |
| Ad testing | 66% | 38% | 28% |
| Versioning | 53% | 35% | 18% |
| Creative development/production | 52% | 31% | 21% |
| Quality assurance | 51% | 32% | 19% |

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## Technology And Current Processes Hinder Firms' Ability To Deliver

Many brands are early in their journeys toward more streamlined, automated, technology-driven creative approaches. In fact, more than half of respondents say their firms do not have the proper technology in place to assist with digital advertising content creation, but most believe that improved creative tech would benefit their digital ad strategies. And 70% of respondents say their firms are devoting more time to advertising content creation than they would prefer, and just 44% agree that their current processes are effective.

Without the proper technology on hand — and with outmoded processes in place — much work remains manual, confusing, and time-intensive. Because of this, only half of respondents say they are able to build/design creative content that matches the speed and volume of their ideas.

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**Please rate your level of agreement for each of the statements below.**

● Process    ● Technology

We are devoting more time to advertising content creation than we would prefer. **(70%)**

We are able to build/design creative content that matches the speed and volume of our ideas. **(55%)**

We have effective creative processes in place to create digital advertising content. **(44%)**

Our digital advertising strategy could benefit from improved creative technology. **(80%)**

Our firm could benefit from a more automated digital advertising strategy. **(77%)**

We do not have the proper technology to assist with digital advertising content creation. **(58%)**

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# Firms Struggle With Speed And Relevancy

The top two struggles firms face when producing and developing advertisements are relevancy and speed, which is evident in many forms in both production and development. When producing digital ads, firms struggle with localization, optimizing campaigns, and keeping up with rapid digital growth. And when it comes to developing new assets, they struggle with organizing inputs, lack of visibility into how they're used in local markets, and slow campaign time-to-market. When relevancy is hampered and speed-to-market is slow, ad creative quality can suffer as a byproduct.

## Challenges In Producing Digital Ad Content

Localizing content **(44%)**

Optimizing our campaigns **(39%)**

Educating employees/reducing skill gaps **(36%)**

Keeping up with rapid digital growth **(36%)**

Analyzing data and metrics **(35%)**

## Challenges in Developing New Digital Ad Assets

Difficulty consolidating campaign inputs **(43%)**

Lack of visibility into local asset use **(38%)**

Slow campaign time-to-market **(37%)**

Translation errors **(36%)**

Repetitive production work **(33%)**

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# Use Automation To Create And Scale Digital Content

Firms are seeking solutions that can help fill gaps in their current processes and serve areas that are left uncovered by their current approaches. Firms want solutions that have one cohesive platform, adaptable creative content capabilities, and easy distribution.

These solutions rely heavily on automation, which can seem intimidating to many firms. However, automation technology can transform processes and impact firms' ability to deliver relevancy, speed, and quality by providing efficiencies when and where they're needed.

**What capabilities would be most useful to you in creating/scaling your digital advertising content?**

A cohesive platform to track production, operations, and performance **(42%)**

Creative content that adapts based on data **(35%)**

Built-in metrics/testing **(33%)**

One-click creative distribution across platforms and channels **(32%)**

End-to-end workflow for multichannel digital creative **(30%)**

Base: 224 digital advertising decision makers
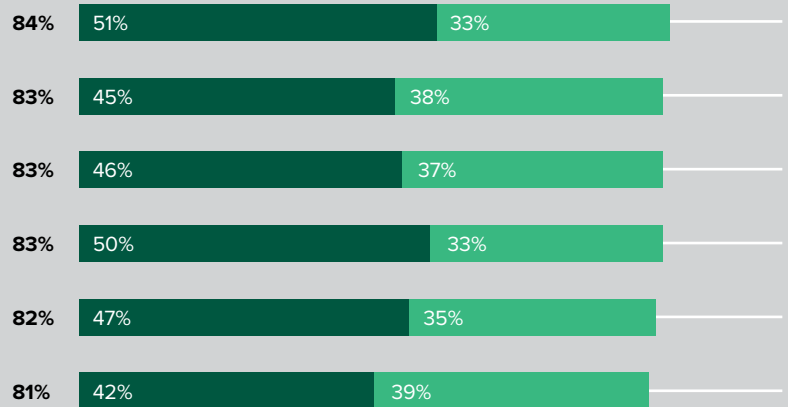Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Celtra, December 2019

## Automation Improves Speed, Quality, and Relevancy

Automating creative production approaches will yield a multitude of business and financial benefits for firms, including volume of creative produced, improved efficiency, and quality of creative. A promising road lies ahead if firms can determine how and where to automate their processes. Firms expect automation to continue to play an instrumental role in their ability to achieve their goals in the future as well. Over the next five years, firms expect automation to have the most powerful impact in increasing the volume of ad campaigns (84%), improving process/workflow efficiency (83%), improving creative relevancy (82%), and improving creative quality (79%).

**You said you were prioritizing the following initiatives over the next five years. How much of an impact would automating your creative content creation have on achieving these goals?**

● Positive impact
● Critical positive impact

| | | Positive impact | Critical positive impact |
|---|---|---|---|
| Increase volume of ad campaigns launched annually | 84% | 51% | 33% |
| Improve process/workflow efficiency in creative | 83% | 45% | 38% |
| Improve digital advertising creative performance | 83% | 46% | 37% |
| Improve/increase localization efforts | 83% | 50% | 33% |
| Improve creative relevancy | 82% | 47% | 35% |
| Increase the speed of creative development | 81% | 42% | 39% |

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The reality of advertising today is one of media fragmentation, heightened consumer expectation, and a move toward relevance. This places a burden on traditional creative tools and processes — and it's a hill that's too steep to climb without some rethinking.

- Marketers struggle to keep up with the creative needs of today's advertising; their tools and processes are no longer up to the task.

- New tools exist to improve process efficiency, workflow, and the scale and relevancy of creative output, including much-needed localization.

- Firms that turn to automation in their creative processes and production anticipate myriad benefits, including critically improved advertising performance and massive efficiencies.

**Project Director:**

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**Contributing Research:**

Forrester's B2C Marketing

research group

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## Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Celtra. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 224 digital advertising decision makers in the US and the UK. The custom survey was completed in December 2019.

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## Demographics

**GEOGRAPHY**

**51%** United States

**49%** United Kingdom

**INDUSTRY (TOP 4)**

**16%** Retail

**12%** Technology/tech services

**10%** Travel and hospitality

**9%** Entertainment

**ANNUAL REVENUE (USD)**

**46%** $250M to $649M

**31%** $650M to $999M

**23%** $1B+

**RESPONDENT LEVEL**

**48%** Manager

**34%** Director

**18%** Vice president