

# AdAge

**How a Creative Management Platform (CMP) Can Provide a Powerful Creative Lever to Make Advertising More Effective**

## REFOCUSING THE ROLE OF CREATIVE

Sponsor Content



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How a Creative Management Platform (CMP) can provide a powerful creative lever to make advertising more effective

**Programmatic media buying** has worked to turn advertising into a data science. And if an ad can reach the right audience, does it matter if the message is relevant and effective? Does it matter if the content has been optimized and the experience is flawless?

In other words: Does the creative performance matter?

It seems a rhetorical question. No one in the marketing business would ever argue that the content of an ad doesn't matter.

But to a large degree, creative has been an inaccessible resource for brands. Compelling creative may be the goal, but the current production process and tools simply aren't compatible with current digital advertising.

Media placements are a constantly moving target, and the factory line approach to digital creative production isn't able to scale the bespoke opportunities that publisher placements now provide.

And this problem is increasing.

"Creative is the conduit for the marketer's message. It should be as precise and data driven as the media to achieve optimal results," said Miha Mikek, Celtra's founder and CEO. "In order to get there, creative needs to become real-time, from production to serving, measurement and optimization, it all needs to be actionable."

But the fast-changing, multilayered digital world has created challenges for even the world's largest marketers.

Ana Paula Duarte, global media director for Unilever, says, "Marketing in a multichannel



**Ana Paula Duarte, global media director for Unilever, believes the multilayered, digital world has created a new complexity for global marketers.**

and multiscreen world means engaging with consumers on their terms—when they want, where they want and how they want. This means a brand message now needs to be optimized across multiple formats, devices, data triggers and delivered across multiple audiences."

She adds, "When coupled with the programmatic ecosystem and multiagency landscape, the creative delivery and optimization process becomes increasingly complex."

Can marketers and agencies find ways to improve collaboration between their creative and media teams, and help the quality of digital creative catch up with the power of digital buying?

## Why Is It So Hard to Do Great Digital Creative?

The quality and impact of digital creative has been affected by a variety of specific issues—each with ramifications for the overall effectiveness and value of ad spending:

- **Strong brand messaging gets lost.**

The digital buying process is not conducive to strong brand messaging. The chaotic, last-minute nature of the process often means brands lose control of the message.

“To make a digital campaign go live, lots of things have to come together, and what often happens is that it’s either go live late or not at all. Some clients have the outlook that if it goes live at all, it’s a win,” says Jonathan Milne, Celtra’s chief revenue officer. “But that ad is maybe not as good as it could be, because there wasn’t the energy or time to optimize it.”

- **The too-many-cooks-in-the-kitchen problem.** A brand’s marketing team often consists of a large number of people—from different departments and agencies, applying different types of processes—all working on ads, but not necessarily sharing information or working together. The group might include in-house creatives, creative agencies, media agencies, digital specialists, vendors and media partners such as digital publishers. Measurement, data and goals frequently aren’t shared or consistent.

- **Global creative consistency is hard to get right.** These creative issues are magnified for larger marketers with a portfolio of global brands. Maintaining brand consistency across platforms, formats, cultures and markets is challenging enough, even before considering the chaotic way digital ads are often created.

“When you run a campaign in multiple markets on multiple channels, it gets complicated. People start using the wrong assets because they’re easily available—but it’s not the right font, colors, or logo or product shots. Perhaps it’s last year’s stuff,” Milne says. “But as a marketer, you care deeply about that brand and how it’s being presented.”

Clearly the creative process has not caught up with digital technologies. “Whilst media has scaled through buying technology—with DSPs, DMPs and ad servers—when it comes to creative, technology has not permeated very far in terms of scaling creative,” Milne says.

## How Creative Management Platforms Can Help

Creative management platforms (CMPs) are a cloud-based technology that enables real-time, actionable creative—from creative production, to distribution, measurement and optimization. The CMP provides a creative lever and allows marketers to manage the entire creative lifecycle in digital advertising.

“The Celtra CMP empowers brands to run a more sophisticated and better performing creative at scale,” says Mikek. “It allows more testing of what really works, it allows faster innovation and the use of bespoke, native experiences personalized to each customer.

Operationally this technology connects all the stakeholders and allows for seamless collaboration and data sharing. The result is usually much higher productivity, quality and unlimitedly better advertising performance.”

Matevz Klanjsek, Celtra’s co-founder and chief product officer, firmly believes creative technology like this is “the only way for creative to come back. A CMP is a powerful lever that comes with lots of creative knowledge that is built and trained in the system,” he says.

One of the key things, he says, is the “advertising knowledge that is put into the technology; this is not something that engineers alone can do. You have to understand advertising and how it works.”

## Global Scale, Local Markets

Creative Management Platforms offer benefits to brands both large and small. Adopters of the technology can better understand the value of their creative; they can maximize efficiencies and connect data insights with their messaging to create relevant, impactful advertising. Offering a case study is Unilever, a company with mass global reach, with hundreds of agencies and media suppliers around the world.

Unilever piloted with Celtra’s CMP and found that a coordinated approach to creative is helping “to drive relevant and engaging brand experiences via mobile first, contextually relevant creatives that are delivered across screens and platforms,” Duarte says. “Creative management platforms can add value and help drive better advertising effectiveness with improved user experience and personalization at scale.”

“The challenge and the opportunity is to drive creative excellence at scale, to land best-in-class brand experiences across all our brands, across the 190 markets that we operate and improving the lives of the 2.5 billion people that we connect every day with our products,” Duarte says. “People deserve advertising that feels native to each medium and delivers emotional value.”

She says the industry needs to face up to the digital creative challenge. “This is the real challenge our industry is facing. There is a need to bridge the think/do gap towards digital to drive better creativity. Just as an example, everyone talks about mobile. Everyone acknowledges it’s a huge opportunity. However, only a handful are really responding to the opportunity in full. In most cases, mobile creative [executions] are still an afterthought in the creative development process. Of course, this would have an impact on the creative quality and its effectiveness. No wonder we see ad blocking on the rise.”

### Managing the Creative Process

Whether they employ a CMP or not, brands and agencies can work to improve the digital advertising that is being produced (and the results from it) by taking a hard look at how the creative process is being managed in a programmatic world.

Here are some suggestions about how to refocus on the role of creative:

- **Remember it’s not just about the media**—programmatic is not the message, only a way of delivering the message.

- **Be honest about the quality of digital advertising that is being published.** “People are not looking at the big goal of making good advertising,” Klanjsek says. “We need to start being honest about that stuff, measuring our ads as scientifically as possible, and stop buying into buzzwords.”

- **Think big picture.** It’s easy to become obsessed with the details of a digital campaign—where the logo is placed, whether the format is vertical or horizontal. “Don’t lose sight of the bigger value of creative,” Klanjsek says.

- **Support collaboration** between a brand’s creative team and those responsible for planning and buying media—in all markets and

countries—for stronger, more effective campaigns that efficiently use company resources.

- **Research the creative that is being used** and have a repository for those learnings, so you are not starting from scratch every time. “In digital, too often every campaign is a fresh start; people tend to start again each time,” Milne says. “Everyone needs to take the learnings from last time to help improve the process.”

- **Follow basic best practices for digital—and especially mobile—advertising.** Best practice suggestions include some well-discussed and predictable strategies: Use video to grab attention; a logo on every frame, good product shots and a human presence are more effective and engaging; make sure to include a strong call to action. But some best practices are less obvious. For instance, branding placed at the top of an ad is more effective, while dual branding is often confusing or distracting. Emotion and humor tend to resonate more strongly with consumers.

- **Finally, ask if you are investing enough into the creative part of your digital advertising.** There’s no hard-and-fast rule about how much to spend, Mikek says, “But if you are investing 1 percent of your digital budget into creative, you’re probably not getting the most out of it. Getting great results starts with investing the proper amount into creative. Without great content, you can’t achieve the best results.”

Says Milne: “The digital ad world seems to be so chaotic—creative and media agencies are separated, they don’t sit down to craft together the message they need. Often, they sit at completely different companies. But one thing that can make it easier is the technology. You need to have a technology platform for creative so you can collaborate, so you can reuse creative elements, can measure and build on top of what you do.”

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### **About Celtra**

Celtra is the creative management platform for digital advertising.

Marketers and publishers use the self-service software to create, distribute, measure and optimize ads, with real-time control and efficiency at scale. It powers display, video and native ads for two-thirds of Fortune 500 brands across all screens and media. Celtra is headquartered in Boston, with offices in New York City, San Francisco, London, Ljubljana, Sydney and Singapore.

For more information, visit

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