

THREE PREDICTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF CREATIVE WORK



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Dropbox



reactive marketing work used to hit predictable snags: a tight deadline, a tough client, a budget that doesn't go far enough. Recently, a host of new challenges have been added to the list.

The AI age means that teams are able to make more content, work with more collaborators, and adapt work for more formats than ever. That's opening up real opportunities, but it also creates disruption. How do you maintain clarity and coherence as the volume of content explodes? What new skills become important as the nature of the job changes?

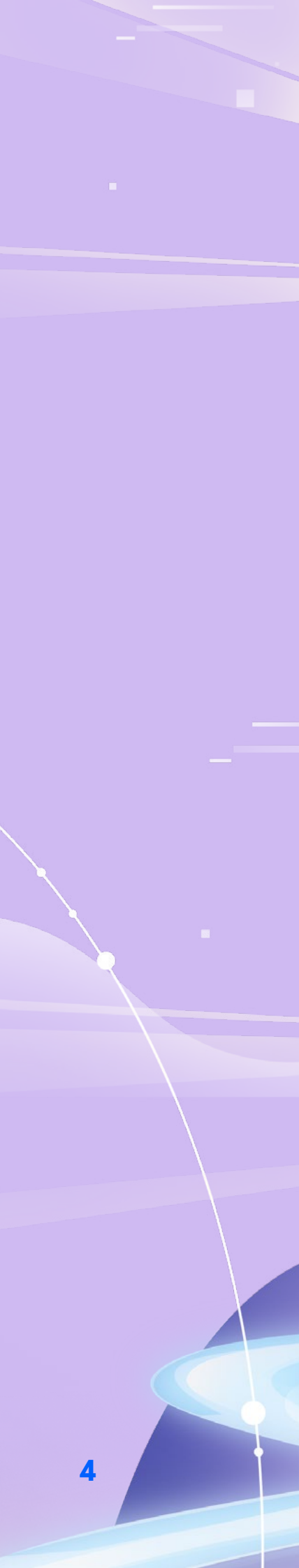
To answer those questions, we asked four people close to the work today to predict where it's headed tomorrow...



1. TASTE WILL BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT

It's never been easier to make something. It's never been harder to know if it's any good.

“AI removes a huge amount of production friction,” says Liz Armistead, Dropbox’s VP of brand marketing and creative campaigns. “Things that used to take days now happen incredibly fast.”



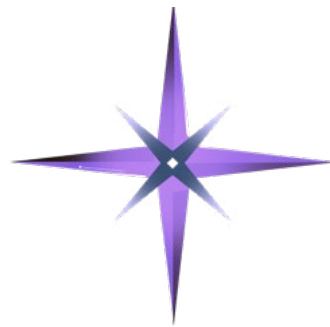
That speed changes where creatives need to focus their time. With a dozen directions to choose from instead of one, the work is increasingly about deciding which is worth pursuing, and whether it will actually connect with an audience. Armistead points to a McKinsey estimate that agentic AI could speed up campaign creation and execution by [10 to 15 times](#). “Does the world need 10 to 15 times more advertising? I don’t think so,” she says. “Exponentially more emotionally resonant campaigns that earn customers’ attention? Yes, please.”

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Russell Goldman, founder of More Wow and Buildable Engine

To Russell Goldman, founder of New York design agency More Wow—and creator of Buildable Engine, a spatial intelligence platform for the built world—the people who are best able to combine judgment and AI to deliver that level of impact will be those in possession of a specific but subtle talent. “It’s the ability to imbue creative outputs with meaning—and that requires having a very personal point of view,” he says. “That will become the most valuable thing.” The skillsets of creatives will start to look more like a director’s or an editor-in-chief’s: exercising taste confidently, steering a distinctive vision.

Scaling that taste, however, will require a systemic overhaul. “Agencies will need to consciously codify what makes them distinct—and then actually hold themselves accountable to it, in how they hire, how they evaluate work, and what they reward,” says Goldman.



2. YOUR TOOLS WILL ANTICIPATE YOUR NEEDS

Every project has a moment (or several) when someone asks, “Wait, is this the right version?”

It’s practically inevitable. The modern creative process runs through more collaborators, more tools, and more handoffs than ever, and that’s exactly where things tend to go wrong. “Context can get stripped away, version control gets messy, and the system starts to break,” says Nikki Howley, Dropbox’s global industry lead for media and creative. You can probably relate: a file helpfully called “final_v2_FINAL” that wasn’t, well, final; a decision revisited because nobody remembers it had already been made.



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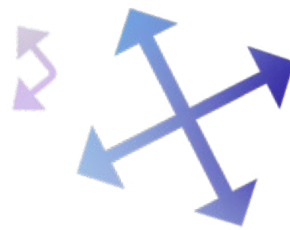
Nikki Howley, global industry lead for media and creative, Dropbox

Software can already make a difference here. Dropbox’s approach is to keep everything connected: files, versions, feedback, and approvals stay attached to the work itself, instead of scattered across email, chat, and a half dozen tools. As an example of how that looks in practice, Howley points to digital design studio 59 Productions’ video and projection mapping work for *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* in London. The team used Dropbox’s audio and visual collaboration tool Dropbox Replay to share rehearsal footage with colleagues in Los Angeles and gather their notes. Their comments flowed straight into the animators’ editing software. “They didn’t have to sift through email or figure out exactly which comments related to what,” Howley says.

In the future, she forecasts that AI will give us tools that participate more directly in the creative process. “Systems will not just respond but anticipate,” predicts Howley. “They will see what you’re working on and proactively surface the relevant brand asset, feedback, or previous campaign.”



Crucially, those systems may be able to tap into wider context that helps channel creative energies in productive ways. Goldman's Buildable Engine offers a glimpse of how this might look. His tool helps real-estate developers produce architectural plans that comply with building codes and the standards of the business. "In the future, it will accompany the creator while they're creating, to basically guide their creativity so that they're working in an efficient way towards something that's actually possible, versus a path that will never work."



3. CONTENT WILL SHIFT FROM STATIC TO LIQUID

Press play on the same campaign twice, and you might see two different things.

Marketers already create different formats for different channels, and different messaging for different audiences. The next step, says Sofie Hvitved, futurist and director of media futures and innovation at the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies, is content that adapts on its own, in real time, based on who's watching and what they care about.

“Turning text into podcasts or images into video is happening now, and it's an early layer,” she says. “The deeper shift will be from content as a finished artifact to content as structured contextual knowledge that can be recombined around a person's needs, situation, and intent.” Instead of a fixed ad, for example, we will likely see brands create something more like a set of building blocks (key claims, tone, visuals, proof points) that get reassembled for the moment. It could be a three-minute interactive game for one person and a 30-second piece of vertical video for another.



“Brands need to think more about building the semantic architecture around their work.”

Sofie Hvitved, director of media futures and innovation, Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies



Hvitved points to the Brian Eno biopic *Eno*, which bills itself as the first generative documentary, as a sign of what's coming. Part of the movie is pre-cut, but part of it generates fresh each time you watch it. "Imagine if it knew I was really into David Bowie, and specifically one aspect of his relationship with Eno," she says. "Then it could focus my version on that."

That flexibility is exciting, but it's not hard to imagine the challenges. If content can become anything, how do you stop it morphing into something that isn't right for your brand? "In that world, brands need to think more about building the semantic architecture around their work," says Hvitved. In other words, they will need to create a machine-readable set of rules for how their content can flex. Maybe sustainability claims can only run alongside verified certifications. Maybe an irreverent tone is never allowed in pricing or safety messaging.

As Howley puts it: "It's quite easy to scale content, to make it dynamic and adaptive. What's much harder is scaling meaning and coherence."





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