

MARKETING WORK MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

BUYER'S GUIDE

Work Chaos, Solved.

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS **FOR MARKETING TEAMS IS CHAOS**

In-house creative services teams and agencies face a constant deluge of work requests, endless interruptions, shifting priorities, and heavy workloads. The resulting disorder and confusion make it hard to focus on what's most important rather than on what fire is presently burning. But, with almost half of creative teams saying they don't use any kind of project tracking software and a quarter saying they don't track projects at all,1 it's no surprise work is chaos.

Even marketing teams and agencies that use project management tools may still find themselves drowning in work, waiting for approvals stuck in the twilight zone, and confused about what to work on next. This is largely due to the fact that most "solutions" are missing two fundamental aspects of work management: first, a good marketing work management solution that intuitively and seamlessly works the way its users naturally work. Second, a comprehensive structure that provides complete visibility into all aspects of the marketing workflow. To eliminate work chaos and free up more time for real work, these teams need a solution that provides both aspects.



OF CREATIVE TEAMS DON'T TRACK PROJECTS AT ALL



5 SIGNS YOUR MARKETING TEAM DEALS WITH WORK CHAOS

Whether your team is one of the lucky few currently using a project-tracking solution, or you're stuck relying on spreadsheets or scribbles on whiteboards, here are five signs that your creative team needs a different method to control their work chaos:

Disconnected tools



Everyone has their favorite tools—email, spreadsheets, timesheets, document asset storage, and more—to manage different parts of their work. But the problem is these tools don't work well together, which requires a lot of jumping from tool to tool. Disconnected tools add extra time, create more rework, and build information silos where no one has a comprehensive view of all the work.

2. Disconnected teams



Disconnected tools almost always lead to disconnected, siloed teams where no one knows what anyone else is doing and teams aren't as agile, productive, or responsive as they need to be. When every team or individual team member uses their own tools, there's no visibility into the work other teams are doing. As a result, teams have no insight into who or what is relying on them, so they schedule weekly (sometimes daily) meetings. Unfortunately, team members can spend inordinate amounts of time in status meetings and still have to run around trying to dig up the information they need.

3. **Disconnected processes**



Just like everyone has their favorite tools, everyone has their favorite way of doing things. However, when everyone has their own way of prioritizing work, tracking work requests, or keeping others up to date, it creates a landslide of inefficiency and ineffectiveness. With everyone in their own dark tunnel hammering away, there is no way to see how the tunnels (or tasks) should connect. Such disconnection results in wasted time, missed deadlines, budget overruns, rework, poor collaboration, and lots of fire drills.

Low productivity and less creativity



Work requests come in every size and flavor—emails, hallway conversations, and office drive-bys, to name a few. Add distractions and interruptions to the mix, and the resulting chaos throws not just productivity, but also creativity, right out the window. Without the proper structures in place, priorities tend to shift daily, team members resort to working on their "pet projects," and the client who screams the loudest almost always gets what they want, regardless of strategic goals. In such a chaotic, fast-paced, and high-pressure environment, work is rarely delivered on time and creativity dwindles.

5. No credibility



With all the disconnection and chaos, work requests are often lost or forgotten. Teams suffer from a lack of clear communication. Teams frequently work overtime, but still miss deadlines. It only takes one bad experience for clients to lose confidence that their projects will be delivered as agreed upon and that the work will be high quality. The result is a slippery slope that leads to clients outsourcing the "good jobs" more often, the team getting less engaging work, and an overall lack of credibility with clients and executives about the value of the team.



MORE WORK, LESS TIME.

Do you have the tools to keep up?

Nowhere is the do-more-with-less mentality more present than when it comes to marketing and agency work. With smaller budgets, increased workloads, expanded scopes of work, and shorter turnaround times, it's a serious struggle to keep up. And since additional resources don't grow on trees, teams must find ways to eliminate inefficiencies and improve productivity if they want to avoid burnout.

Finding a tool that can reduce work inefficiency is a critical component of achieving success. However, most project management tools are designed to manage only the planning and execution phases of a project lifecycle, leaving the rest of the workflow up to other tools. Additionally, most solutions are designed for IT and development teams rather than for marketing teams or agencies, who work differently and need different features. Finally, many project solutions have a steep learning curve that can further reduce, rather than add to, your team's productivity.



THE BIGGEST WORK INEFFICIENCIES OF MARKETING TEAMS AND AGENCIES

AtTask recently surveyed more than 260 marketing and agency professionals across the U.S. The survey revealed the following top four contributors to marketing work chaos:

Distractions and Interruptions

74 percent of marketing professionals cited distractions and interruptions as their number one work inefficiency.² Distractions and interruptions not only break the creative flow, but according to research, can eat up to 2.1 hours a day for the average worker.3





Overflowing Email Inboxes

Email may be the most commonly used tool, but it's not the most efficient. 63 percent of marketing professionals cited overflowing email inboxes as one of their top work inefficiencies,⁴ and according to a recent McKinsey Global Institute report, the average worker spends 28 percent of the workweek managing email.5

Unproductive Meetings

56 percent of marketing professionals listed unproductive meetings as one of their top work inefficiencies.⁶ With time wasted in chitchat and discussions that go nowhere, studies show that as much as 50 percent of meeting time is unproductive and up to 25 percent of it is spent discussing irrelevant issues.⁷





Random Work Requests

36 percent of respondents cited random work requests as a major work inefficiency,8 making it clear that the common refrain of "It'll only take five minutes", is not so benign. Random requests rarely only take five minutes and almost always reduce your focus on getting the most important tasks done first.



THE RIGHT STRUCTURE

When it comes to managing marketing and agency work, having the right structure in place is the key to controlling work chaos. What does the right structure look like? Here are the three most important components:



1. Manage All Work in One Place

When you're using several disparate tools, work and data get scattered, making gathering information from various tools, creating reports, and keeping everyone in the loop laborious. It requires you to constantly update spreadsheets, build reports from scratch, or some other manual process. Having a single tool that manages the entire work lifecycle in one place eliminates silos, provides instant status updates, and keeps all work connected and in context so work can continue to flow smoothly.

In addition, with a single source of truth provided by one tool, you'll be able to easily provide concrete data and real-time insights into what your team is doing and the value they deliver.



2. **Automate Processes**

Using templates and creative briefs to help automate processes may seem counterintuitive—more forms, more time—and you may encounter some initial pushback. But automating common processes eliminates starting from scratch every time you launch a new project or campaign. This saves you time, increases your outputs, and enhances your relationships with clients through building trust and credibility.

Most importantly, using templates and automating processes frees up time for creativity by eliminating repetition, building team consensus, and aligning expectations.



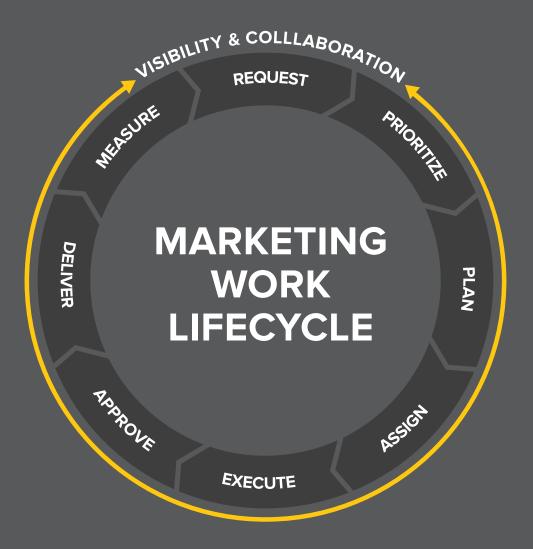
Collaborate in Context

Daily status meetings, long email chains, phone calls that no one else has visibility into, or instant messages that disappear with the closing of a window—these kinds of communications make it difficult to collaborate effectively. Who said what gets forgotten or time gets wasted looking for buried information. Instead, collaboration needs to happen in the context of the work done, in a social and natural way, so that all communication remains connected to the work.

When information such as team members, dates and times, related documents, project discussions, and other important information are all connected to the work, feedback doesn't get forgotten and time isn't wasted searching for answers or insights. Instead, everyone stays on the same page, in one place.

MANAGE WORK THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WORK LIFECYCLE

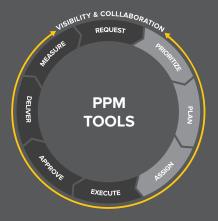
Most of the solutions available to help marketing teams and agencies manage work fail to manage the work lifecycle, end to end. At best, they only focus on one or two pieces, which forces marketers to enlist the help of additional tools and resources to supplement the rest.







MOST TOOLS ONLY OFFER PARTIAL SOLUTIONS



Project Management Tools

Most project management tools fail to accommodate non-project work (i.e., unstructured work, everyday "lights on" work, ad hoc requests, etc.). They may work fine for project planning and execution, but will leave you struggling with how to manage the flood of work requests, prioritize work according to strategic goals, or streamline approvals to keep deliverables on time.



Task Management Tools

There are thousands of task management apps or tools out there for you to choose from, but they are usually simplistic and only help manage one aspect of your work execution. You'll need other tools to help you plan, prioritize, collaborate, track time, or measure outcomes.



Social Tools

Most social tools are apps or add-ons that don't allow you to collaborate in the context of your work. This means communication about a specific asset or campaign remains disconnected from the actual work it's related to and collaboration doesn't flow through the entire work lifecycle.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT TOOL

There are a number of essential components to consider when investing in a marketing work management solution. To make it easier, use this comparison chart for evaluating up to three project or work management tools you may be considering.

DIRECTIONS:

Use the checklist below to compare up to 3 solutions side-by-side (Shortcut: Check all the boxes for AtTask). Next, note the features that are missing and evaluate how important they are to your team's ability to manage the entire lifecycle of work (the only way to avoid work chaos). Understanding the trade-offs between different solutions will help you see the benefit of implementing one tool over another.

WORK REQUESTS

FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION 3	VALUE
				Standardize request intake
CENTRALIZED				Organize client/customer requests
REQUEST				Customize queues and routing rules
MANAGEMENT				Easily convert requests into projects
				Stop requests from getting lost or forgotten
CUSTOMIZED CREATIVE BRIEFS				Get all job information up front
				Create customized fields
				Build creative briefs into work requests and eliminate extra steps
REQUEST TRACKING				Provide requestors/clients with visibility into the requests they've submitted
				Get visibility into requests made of your team

WORK PRIORITIZATION						
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE		
				See all requests in one place		
PRIORITIZING REQUESTS				Choose requests with the most strategic value to the company		
				Work on the best work instead of the next work		
				Prioritize personal 'Working On' tasks		
PRIORITIZING TASKS				Prioritize work by commit date, project name, or a customized drag and drop order		



WORK PLANNING							
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE			
				Customize project plan based on desired workflow			
WORKFLOW AND				Plan out tasks, subtasks, budgets, resources, and approval processes			
PROJECT PLANNING				Avoid forgetting dependencies			
				Plan out deadlines, hard dates, predecessor relationships, and milestones			
				Create templates that fit to your workflow			
				Ensure no steps are forgotten			
CUSTOMIZABLE WORK TEMPLATES				Easily convert existing or past projects into templates			
				Streamline repeatable work			
				Analyze past projects for constant improvement			

WORK ASSIGNMENTS							
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE			
SMART TEAM				Assign tasks to team members based on job roles and availability			
ASSIGNMENTS				Make smart , balanced resource decisions			
				Eliminate resource planning meetings			
				See every team member and task assigned in visual, linear calendar view			
RESOURCE				Drag and drop work requests or tasks to individual resources			
CALENDAR				Get a high-level view of who's working on what			
				Drag and drop resources into a task to automatically make assignments			
				View resource grid to see how many hours are allocated to each team member			
RESOURCE PLANNING				Get notified when hours exceed capacity			
				Mitigate burnout by keeping hours within appropriate capacity level			



WORK EXECUTION						
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE		
				Receive notification when project/task is at risk or late		
PROJECT AND TASK				Receive notification if changing date affects overall project schedule		
MANAGEMENT				Receive notification on pending approvals		
				Customize notification settings on an individual user basis		
				Receive notification when project/task is at risk or late		
				Receive notification if changing a date affects overall project schedule		
WORK NOTIFICATION				Receive notification when dependent tasks can be started		
				Receive notification on pending approvals		
				Get real-time status updates		
COLLABORATION IN CONTEXT				Communicate in the context of work		
INCONTEXT				Keep all work communications in one place, with time stamps		
				Create flexible, agile teams		
				Organize work in sprints or iterations		
				Give point values and assign work based on team member availability		
AGILE CAPABILITIES				Color code storyboard tiles to communicate important info		
				View burndown chart to see how iterations are moving along		
				Measure capacity and reallocate stories based on points/hours		
ALL WORK IN				Create a central location to manage all work, not just large projects or campaigns		
ALL WORK IN ONE LOCATION				Use one tool to manage all aspects of work		
				Eliminate disparate or excess tools		
				Keep team members accountable for their work		
WORK ACCOUNTABILITY				Provide instant feedback to team members		
AND RECOGNITION				Ensure team members are recognized and feel appreciated for their work		



WORK APPROVALS							
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE			
				View any digital asset			
INLINE DIGITAL				Provide feedback and edit assets in real-time in one central location			
PROOFING				Compare asset versions side by side			
				Streamline the creative and feedback processes			
				Set up boxed approvals or one-off approvals			
TEMPLATE				Automatically route approval requests to the right person at the right time			
APPROVAL CHAINS				Receive notification when bottlenecks occur			
				Cut back on time it takes to get work approved			
				Get time stamped record of approvals			

WORK VISIBILITY							
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE			
				Customize calendar views			
CALENDAR VIEWS				Pre-defined filters to automatically keep track of everything			
CALENDAR VIEWS				Build team, project, or client specific calendars			
				Share calendars with clients/3rd parties so deadlines are visible			
				Track hours by task within user's workflow			
TIME TRACKING				Automatically update deliverables from time-tracking numbers			
TIME TRACKING				View planned vs. actual hours			
				Set and view work durations in a Gantt chart			
				Get high-level or granular visibility into the progress of all work			
REPORTING AND DASHBOARDS				Demonstrate the progress and value of projects in real-time			
				Find all assets and data in one place and trust they are up to date			
				Justify existing and additional resources			
INDIVIDUAL AND				Easily control the workflow process			
TEAM INSIGHT				Get visibility into resource utilization and availability			
				View current task lists/work loads for individuals or team entities			
GLOBAL VIEW				Get visibility at every stage of the workflow, from initial request to final metrics			



PRODUCT INTEGRATIONS							
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE			
				Submit and receive work requests, manage work, and collaborate without leaving Outlook			
MICROSOFT OUTLOOK				See all work requests in Outlook and easily update status, log time, and mark work as done			
				Reduce emails and status meetings and improve visibility			
				Store, organize, and tag all documents and assets			
DIGITAL ASSET				Upload documents and assets to tasks so they stay in context			
MANAGEMENT				Maintain version control			
				Integrate with DAM leaders Widen or WebDAM			
ONLINE DOCUMENT				Create a seamless connection between work and leading cloud storage solutions			
AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT				Integrate with Google Drive, SharePoint, Box.com, or Dropbox			
BUSINESS				Make digital campaign management, data, and approvals easy			
APPLICATIONS				Integrate with critical applications like ExactTarget, Salesforce.com, and Jira			
SOCIAL AND				Break down information silos and unify social and collaboration tools			
COLLABORATION TOOLS				Integrate with common and critical applications like Jive and ProofHQ			
CUSTOM				Integrate with any tool your team uses with RESTful APIs			
CONNECTIONS				Build custom integrations with solutions such as SAP and Oracle			

PRODUCT USABILITY						
FUNCTIONALITY	SOLUTION ①	SOLUTION ②	SOLUTION ③	VALUE		
				Make it work the way you and your team work		
USER-FRIENDLY INTERFACE				Ensure adoption with a simple, user-friendly interface		
				Customizable, user-focused interface		
				Work on the go with full-featured apps for the iPhone and Android		
CLOUD/MOBILE ACCESS				Capture a complete view with iPad dashboard reporting		
				Maintain visibility and control from anywhere, anytime, and any device		

PRODUCT USABILITY CONTINUES >>



PRODUCT USABILITY (CONTINUES)							
TOOL CONSOLIDATION				Do it all in one tool (request, prioritize, plan, assign, execute, approve, deliver, and measure)			
				Get data all in one place with tailored integrations for critical point solutions and applications			
				Eliminate(#) of existing disparate point solutions			
				Ensure work is secure throughout the process			
ENTERPRISE GRADE SECURITY				Ensure compliance with company security and regulatory requirements such as, SLA, SAML 2.0, HIPAA, PCI DSS, SOX, FISMA, etc.			

WHY CHOOSE ATTASK?

AtTask Marketing Work Management brings order to the chaos of marketing work.



"AtTask has brought order to chaos. It has allowed us to regain our reputation for creative excellence. It's allowed us to take smart, creative people and take away the burden of trying to organize themselves and trying to find stuff. It allows them to be creative."

BILL GATTINGER

Senior Manager, Traffic, Production & Direct Marketing ATB Financial



"Before AtTask, we were bouncing between so many different systems, between our internal portal and our project management software. We were using email way too much and trying to get approval on graphic design work and managing budgets within Excel, then emailing those to executive management. All that stuff took time we didn't have."

CASEY FLOYD

AVP/Campaign Manager Nevada State Bank



"AtTask really helps to focus the communication between our departments." It gives us a centralized location to track, review, and archive the information being exchanged. It prevents a lot of the stray communication and the fragmentation that can happen with email and voicemail. We get stuff done faster and more accurately, without a lot of unnecessary back and forth."

GRETA MIKKELSEN

Director of Creative Services Harry & David



Endnotes

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- 7. Shirley Fine Lee. "Management/HR Statistics," Shirley Fine Lee (2014). http://www.shirleyfinelee.com/MgmtStats
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AtTask Marketing Work Management

AtTask is a cloud-based Marketing Work Management solution that helps in-house creative teams, marketing departments, and agencies conquer the chaos of excessive email, redundant status meetings, constant rework, and tedious approval processes. Unlike other tools, AtTask Marketing Work Cloud is a centralized, easy-to-adopt solution for managing and collaborating on all creative work through the entire work lifecycle, which improves team productivity, credibility, and executive visibility. AtTask is trusted by thousands of marketing teams and agencies, like Adobe, Sapient Nitro, Covario, RAPP, Cisco, HBO, House of Blues, REI, Schneider Electric, ATB Financial, and more.

Control the chaos of your marketing work.



