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Creative Operations Statistics: Capacity, Approvals, Bad Briefs

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Executive Summary

Most creative-operations statistics that circulate in budget memos come from vendor surveys, and most of them measure perception rather than hours, days or dollars. This ledger traces the figures marketers repeat about creative capacity, approval delays and brief quality back to the organisation that ran each survey, and records sample, sponsor interest, date, exact wording and what the figure does not measure. All pages were retrieved on 25 November 2026, and figures may be superseded.

Capacity. Knak's 2026 survey of 333 enterprise marketing decision-makers reports that 85% missed at least one campaign launch date in 12 months (knak.com). Superside's December 2024 survey of 206 enterprise creative leaders says "more than three quarters" report demand above capacity (www.superside.com), and its 2026 follow-up gives about 86% at or over capacity (www.superside.com). Both are vendor surveys of enterprise leaders.

Approvals. Knak's release ranks approvals and sign-off first among causes at 47%, ahead of design and creative production at 38% (www.demandgenreport.com). Adobe's June 2025 research of more than 1,600 marketers is the origin of the "51 to 200 people" and "three or more approval stages" figures, and the 51 to 200 range was the answer of 47% of respondents, not a universal average (business.adobe.com).

Briefs. The BetterBriefs Project reports that 80% of marketers think they write good briefs while only 10% of creative agencies agree (ipa.co.uk). The "nine in ten briefs change" figure is in the project's own global report, with a base of 945 marketers (20663496.fs1.hubspotusercontent-ap1.net), not on the IPA press page. The 33% "wasted budget" figure is a respondent estimate (ipa.co.uk), not measured waste.

Drift. Repeated numbers are often quoted without the sample, publisher or date that give them meaning. **All 15 ledger rows are quote-safe only with a publisher, sample and date attached**, and no figure in the set isolates delay caused by a single bottleneck for a defined population.

Decision rule. A design subscription adds production capacity. It does not shorten sign-off chains or repair unclear briefs. The triage worksheet in this report tallies the last 20 requests by where each one waited, so a team can see which of the three bottlenecks it has before it buys hours, hires or tightens review.

Introduction and Background

Three different problems hide behind the phrase "creative teams cannot keep up". The first is **capacity**: the work requested exceeds the production hours available. The second is **approvals**: finished or near-finished work waits for reviewers, sign-off or consolidated feedback. The third is **brief quality**: work starts with missing, unclear or later-changed instructions and is redone. Each has a different remedy, and a statistic about one is routinely quoted as evidence for another.

This report is a source ledger. For each widely repeated figure it records who ran the survey, whether the publisher sells something the finding supports, the sample and respondent profile, the date, the exact wording on the originating page, what the figure measures, what it does not, and a sentence that can be quoted without overstating it. It is aimed at marketing leads, heads of creative or design operations, agency owners and founders who are about to put a survey number in a budget memo, board deck or vendor comparison.

Method and limits

Primary pages were opened on 25 November 2026, and each quoted passage was checked against the text retrieved where a page could be read. Some documents, including PDF reports from Knak, Superside and StreamWork and a few trade pages, could not be read in full. Where a figure normally sits in one of those PDFs, this report says so rather than inferring it. Search-result snippets were not used as evidence. No original survey data is presented, and no benchmark is invented.

Two observations frame the ledger. First, most sources here are **vendor surveys**: the publisher sells software or creative services that benefit from the finding. That does not make the numbers wrong, but it determines how they should be worded. Second, the sample is almost always **enterprise-skewed and self-selected**, so none of these figures describes a typical small team or startup.

The Source Ledger: Capacity, Approvals and Briefs

Table 1 below lists the statistics most often repeated in this area. Wording in the first column is quoted from the originating page; the last column offers a sentence that stays inside what the source supports. A row appears only where the originating page was opened and read.

Statistic and exact wording at source	Publisher, sponsor interest, sample, date	Measures / does not measure	Quote-safe sentence
A1. Missed launch dates (85%). "85% of marketing teams have missed at least one planned campaign launch date in the past 12 months due to workflow constraints" (www.prnewswire.com)	Knak, a vendor of marketing production software. 333 enterprise marketing decision-makers in the US, UK and Canada at companies with $50M to $1B+ revenue (knak.com). Release dated 28 July 2026. Trade coverage reports fieldwork from April 20 to May 18, 2026 and says Knak customers were included (www.mediapost.com); the Knak page and release state no field dates.	**Measures:** share of respondents reporting at least one missed date in 12 months, any workflow cause. **Not:** how many dates, how late, the cost, or whether design capacity was the cause.	"In a survey commissioned by Knak of 333 enterprise marketing decision-makers in the US, UK and Canada, 85% reported missing at least one campaign launch date in the prior 12 months because of workflow constraints."

Statistic and exact wording at source	Publisher, sponsor interest, sample, date	Measures / does not measure	Quote-safe sentence
A2. Cause ranking (47%, 38%, 36%). "getting approvals and sign-off (47%), design and creative production (38%) and coordinating across teams (36%)" (www.prnewswire.com)	Same Knak survey. The Knak page says approvals and sign-off are the "single biggest reason" but shows no percentages (knak.com); the percentages appear in the release and in trade coverage.	**Measures:** how often each cause was named. **Not:** cause shares that sum to 100%, or a delay in days.	"Knak's respondents most often named approvals and sign-off (47%), then design and creative production (38%), as reasons for missed launches."
A3. Time on production (82%). "of enterprise marketing teams spend at least half their time on production" (knak.com)	Knak, same sample. The figure is on the Knak page but not in the release.	**Measures:** self-reported share of time. **Not:** designer hours, or whether production includes email build, copy and QA.	"82% of Knak's respondents said their team spends at least half its time on production."
B1. Burnout (about 76%). "About 76% of creative leaders say that they and their teams have felt burned out" (www.superside.com)	Superside, which sells creative services. "More than 200 enterprise creative leaders", December 2024, run by Regina Corso Consulting (www.superside.com). No margin of error or company-size cut-off appears on the page.	**Measures:** leaders reporting that they and their teams felt burned out over the past year. **Not:** a result of capacity shortfall, or a rate for individual designers.	"In a Superside-commissioned survey of 206 enterprise creative leaders (December 2024), about 76% said they and their teams had felt burned out by their workload in the past year."
B2. Demand above capacity ("more than three quarters"). "more than three quarters of leaders say creative demand is higher than their capacity to deliver" (www.superside.com)	Same Superside survey. The report page gives no exact percentage; the chart is an image and the PDF was blocked. Superside blog posts give 78% (superside.com) (www.superside.com).	**Measures:** leaders' agreement that demand exceeds capacity. **Not:** a measured gap in hours.	"Superside reports that more than three quarters of the 206 leaders it surveyed said creative demand exceeds their capacity to deliver (the report page gives no exact figure)."
B3. 2026 follow-up (about 86%). "About 86% of respondents say their team is either at or over capacity" (www.superside.com)	Superside "Breakpoint", 306 creative and marketing team leaders at companies with 1000+ employees (superside.com). Blog dated 25 February 2026. No administrator or field dates found.	**Measures:** "at or over" capacity, a wider test than "demand exceeds capacity". **Not:** comparable with the 2024 question.	"Superside's 2026 survey of 306 leaders at companies with 1,000 or more employees found about 86% at or over capacity."
C1. Briefs: 80% versus 10%. "Marketers (80%) think they write good briefs, and only 10% of creative agencies agree" (ipa.co.uk)	BetterBriefs Project with research partner Flood + Partners, presented at EffWorks Global 2021 (ipa.co.uk). "over 1700 marketeers and agency staff from over 70 countries" (ipa.co.uk).	**Measures:** opinion gap between two respondent groups. **Not:** actual brief quality.	"In the 2021 BetterBriefs survey of 1,700+ marketers and agency staff, 80% of marketers rated their briefs good, against 10% of agencies agreeing."

Statistic and exact wording at source	Publisher, sponsor interest, sample, date	Measures / does not measure	Quote-safe sentence
C2. Wasted budget (33%). "Respondents estimated that a substantial 33% of the marketing budget goes to waste due to poor briefs and misdirected work" (ipa.co.uk)	Same study. The report PDF carries a base of 1,686 and no calculation (20663496.fs1.hubspotusercontent-ap1.net).	**Measures:** respondents' own estimate. **Not:** audited waste.	"Respondents to the BetterBriefs survey estimated that about a third of marketing budget is wasted because of poor briefs."
C3. Briefs change (9 in 10). "9 out of 10 marketers admit that their briefs change once they are briefed-in" (20663496.fs1.hubspotusercontent-ap1.net)	BetterBriefs global report (PDF filename dated December 2023), base of 945 marketers (20663496.fs1.hubspotusercontent-ap1.net). The IPA press page does not contain this figure.	**Measures:** marketers admitting briefs change after briefing-in. **Not:** how often, how much, or why.	"In BetterBriefs research, 9 in 10 of 945 marketers admitted their briefs change once briefed-in."
C4. Rebriefs (69% and 73%). "rebriefs happen too often with marketers (69%) and agencies (73%) agreeing" (ipa.co.uk)	Same study.	**Measures:** agreement with a statement. **Not:** the number of rebriefs per project.	"69% of marketers and 73% of agencies agreed that rebriefs happen too often."
D1. Demand doubled; teams struggling (96%, 48%). "content demand has doubled for 96 percent of marketers" (blog.adobe.com); "leaving 48 percent of creative teams struggling to keep up" (blog.adobe.com)	Adobe with research firm Advanis (blog.adobe.com). Adobe sells creative software. Blog dated 23 October 2025; the page gives no sample, countries or field dates.	**Measures:** perceived demand growth and struggle. **Not:** a sample-defined rate for creative teams.	"An Adobe blog post citing an Adobe and Advanis survey reports demand doubling for 96% of marketers; the post states no sample size."
E1. People per asset and approval stages (47%, 89%). "Nearly half of all respondents (47%) in this survey report" 51 to 200 people on a single content piece, and 18% report more than 200 (business.adobe.com); "89% of marketers sharing that content must go through three or more approval stages" (business.adobe.com)	Adobe research "across more than 1600 marketers" (business.adobe.com), blog dated 16 June 2025. Adobe sells workflow tools. No research firm or field dates on the page.	**Measures:** respondents' reports of people and stages involved. **Not:** time spent or delay.	"In Adobe's survey of more than 1,600 marketers, 47% said 51 to 200 people are involved in a single piece of content, and 89% reported three or more approval stages."
E2. Review cycle (eight days, three versions). "The average creative review process takes eight days and over three versions to get sign-off" (filestage.io)	Filestage, a review and approval software vendor. "366 marketers and creatives" (filestage.io). The page is dated September 2025 but the report is titled 2023; field dates not found.	**Measures:** respondents' reported averages. **Not:** current cycle times.	"Filestage's survey of 366 marketers and creatives reported an average review of eight days and over three versions."
E3. Approvals versus creative effort (74%). "Seventy-four percent said the approval process takes more effort than the creative work itself" (www.prnewswire.com)	StreamWork, an approval software vendor, via a Pollfish opt-in survey (www.prnewswire.com), fielded October 2025 among 500 US adults working in marketing and advertising.	**Measures:** perceived effort. **Not:** hours.	"In a StreamWork-commissioned opt-in survey of 500 US marketing and advertising adults, 74% said approvals take more effort than the creative work."

Statistic and exact wording at source	Publisher, sponsor interest, sample, date	Measures / does not measure	Quote-safe sentence
F1. In-house workload (88%, 90%). "88 percent of respondents indicating their in-house shops' workload increased" (ana.net)	Association of National Advertisers (ANA), an advertiser trade body. 162 respondents, February and March 2023 (ana.net). The 2018 edition: 90%, 412 ANA client-side marketers (ana.net).	**Measures:** direction of change in workload at in-house agencies. **Not:** the size of the load or whether capacity kept pace.	"In ANA's 2023 survey of 162 members, 88% said their in-house agency's workload had increased in the past year."

Table 1 shows that the numbers are not interchangeable. Rows A1 to A3 and B1 to B3 describe leaders' self-reports about strain, rows C1 to C4 describe opinions about briefing, and rows D1 to F1 describe approval chains and workload direction. The ANA and BetterBriefs rows, and the Gartner and CMI figures discussed below, come from research, trade or industry bodies rather than production-software vendors, and even those bodies run member or training programmes. Where a row says "no exact figure" or "no sample", that describes the page retrieved, not the underlying report.

Additional capacity evidence from non-vendor publishers

Three other surveys help calibrate the vendor figures. Gartner reported that budget and resource constraints are the top challenge for 63% of CMOs (www.gartner.com), based on a survey of 174 senior marketing leaders conducted in September 2025 (www.gartner.com). That is a statement about resources in general, not design capacity.

The Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and MarketingProfs reported that 65% of 861 B2B marketers said they faced increased pressure to produce content faster (contentmarketinginstitute.com). Among those facing pressure, "Burnout or creative fatigue" was the most common consequence at 35% (contentmarketinginstitute.com). The 2026 edition of the same series, sponsored by Storyblok, a content-management vendor, found that 39% listed time, people and budget among their top three content challenges (contentmarketinginstitute.com). In other words, resource strain ranks as one challenge among several for B2B content teams, not the dominant one.

Adobe Express surveyed 250 marketing leaders at US enterprises and reported that 77% of teams in large organisations are struggling to meet rising content demand (blog.adobe.com). That figure comes from a different survey, sample and publisher than the Superside figures.

Two Checks Before Quoting a Figure

Two checks apply before quoting any figure: restore the sample and its base, and keep the source's own verb (for example, respondents "estimated" the 33% of budget in row C2; it is not a measurement).

Observed citation behaviour

Secondary articles often carry these numbers with a link to another secondary article rather than the originating page. When citing, name the originator, sample and date, as in the citation template later in this report.

Data Analysis and Evidence

Reading the ledger as a data set, rather than row by row, supports several observations. These are descriptive and limited to the pages opened for this report.

- **Sample sizes are small to moderate.** The leader surveys range from 206 (Superside Overcommitted) to 333 (Knak), with 306 for Superside Breakpoint, 366 for Filestage, 500 for StreamWork and 1,600+ for Adobe's marketer survey. The largest creative-specific sample is BetterBriefs at 1,731 respondents (20663496.fs1.hubspotusercontent-ap1.net), of which 945 are marketers and 786 agency staff. The same PDF gives a base of 1,686 for the budget question (row C2); the retrieved passages do not explain the difference, and the IPA page's "over 1700" describes the 2021 research.
- **Publisher type varies.** The ledger draws on software and services companies, research firms and trade bodies; each row names the publisher so readers can weigh the source themselves. Gartner, ANA and CMI are research or trade bodies, though CMI's 2026 survey was sponsored by a software vendor.
- **Respondents are enterprise or large-company leaders.** Knak's respondents work at companies with $50M to $1B+ revenue, and Superside's Breakpoint respondents are at companies with 1,000 or more employees. None of the creative-capacity surveys describes a startup or small agency.
- **Measures are perceptions.** Burnout, "struggling", "at or over capacity", "takes more effort" and "estimated waste" are opinion or estimate measures. In the sources opened here, no figure is a measured elapsed time or cost for a defined population; the nearest, Filestage's eight days, is a self-reported average.
- **Dates range from 2018 to 2026.** ANA's 90% in-house workload figure dates from August 2018, so older numbers should not be presented as current.

Approvals: what is quantified and what is not

The best-documented approval figures concern **chain length** and **perceived burden**, not time lost. Adobe reports 58% of respondents saying that more than 40% of time is spent managing reviews and approvals (business.adobe.com). StreamWork's survey reports that over 60% of creative professionals spend up to one full day of their workweek chasing approvals (www.prnewswire.com). The IPA's BetterIdeas study, with 1,034 respondents, reports that creative development typically takes 5 rounds to reach a signed-off idea (ipa.co.uk), and that only 23% of agencies and 56% of marketers agree the current approval process works well (ipa.co.uk). The World Federation of Advertisers summary of the same work gives the average as five revision rounds (wfanet.org).

Knak's release adds distribution detail: 69% said emails need two to three rounds of revision before launch (www.prnewswire.com). Optimizely's UK release says slow approval processes are the biggest source of unnecessary work, cited by 38% of marketers (www.optimizely.com); the linked guide describes a survey of 100 UK marketers (www.optimizely.com). Gartner's 2024 release finds that 84% of marketing leaders and employees report high levels of "collaboration drag" (www.gartner.com), defined to include "too much feedback from colleagues" (www.gartner.com), from a survey of 329 marketing leaders and 78 leaders from other functions (www.gartner.com).

Briefs: what is quantified and what is not

The brief evidence is thinner than its reputation suggests. The BetterBriefs figures are opinion measures from BetterBriefs research: the 80% and 10% ratings were presented in 2021, and the 9-in-10 figure comes from the December 2023 global report. An older ANA commentary reported that not one of 105 agency respondents "strongly agreed" that clients provide clear assignment briefings (www.thedrum.com). A trade report on an AI vendor's research said three in four respondents had experienced work being redone because the original direction was unclear (www.adworld.ie), drawing on 286 responses across four surveys (www.adworld.ie). That is a secondary trade report of a vendor's survey; the underlying research was not opened here. No source opened here measures the number of delay days attributable to poor briefs.

The Triage Worksheet: Which Bottleneck Do You Have?

Published statistics cannot tell a team which bottleneck it has. Its own recent requests can. The worksheet below uses the last 20 completed design or web requests and takes about an hour with a project tracker or inbox.

Step 1: tally where each request waited

For each of the 20 requests, record the **single longest wait** as one of four labels:

- **C (capacity):** the request sat before any designer or developer started it.
- **A (approvals):** finished work waited for a reviewer, sign-off or consolidated feedback.
- **B (brief):** work restarted or was substantially redone because information was missing, unclear or changed after kickoff.
- **N (none):** no wait longer than a day.

Step 2: answer ten yes/no questions

1. Did at least 7 of the 20 requests wait more than two working days for a designer to start? (capacity)
2. Is the queue already longer than a week when a small task is submitted? (capacity)
3. Do designers regularly work outside hours to hit dates that were agreed in advance? (capacity)
4. Did at least 7 requests wait longest on a named reviewer's reply? (approvals)
5. Do three or more people sign off on a typical asset? (approvals)
6. Does feedback arrive from people who were not named as approvers, after sign-off was requested? (approvals)
7. Did at least 5 requests restart or change direction after work began because of information supplied later? (briefs)
8. Do at least 5 request forms lack one of audience, goal, format and size, deadline or source assets? (briefs)
9. In first-round feedback, do comments mainly challenge the goal or audience rather than the execution? (briefs)
10. Take your five slowest requests: was the designer actively working for fewer than half of the elapsed days? If yes, more hours alone will not make them faster. (approvals or briefs)

Step 3: apply a decision rule

The thresholds are an illustrative heuristic, not a benchmark, and no published source sets them.

- If **C is 7 or more** and A and B are each 4 or fewer, the bottleneck is most likely **capacity**.
- If **A is 7 or more**, the bottleneck is most likely **approvals**; adding design hours will move work into the same queue sooner.
- If **B is 7 or more**, the bottleneck is most likely **briefs**; extra capacity will produce rework faster.
- If two labels are each 5 or more, address the upstream one (briefs, then approvals) first, because it inflates the demand that capacity has to absorb.

What a subscription changes, and what it does not

A flat-rate design subscription changes **capacity**: more production hours available on a predictable monthly basis, without a hire. It does not change **who signs off**, how many reviewers are involved, or how clear the request is. Tapflare, the publisher of this article, is one option for the capacity case: a flat-rate monthly subscription for graphic design and website development managed by a dedicated project manager. It is not a strategy, campaign or marketing-operations service, and it is not suited to a single one-off job or a large brand-strategy engagement. Approval and brief problems are not fixed by buying more design hours.

Mapping each statistic to a bottleneck

Table 2 maps the ledger statistics to the bottleneck they speak to, and states whether a team should read them as evidence for its own diagnosis.

Statistic	Bottleneck it speaks to	Use for your own diagnosis?
Knak: 85% missed a launch date	Mixed (approvals ranked first by respondents)	As context only. It does not isolate design capacity.
Knak: approvals and sign-off 47%, design and creative production 38%	Approvals, then capacity	Useful comparison of cause rankings, with the sponsor caveat.
Superside: "more than three quarters" demand above capacity; about 86% at or over capacity	Capacity	Perception of leaders at large enterprises.
Superside: about 76% burned out	Capacity (indirect)	Wellbeing signal, not a capacity measure.
Adobe: 96% demand doubled	Capacity (demand side)	Demand growth, not capacity shortfall.
ANA: 88% in-house workload increased	Capacity (demand side)	Direction of change only.
Gartner: 63% of CMOs cite budget and resource constraints	Capacity (general)	Not design-specific.
CMI: 65% under pressure to produce faster	Capacity (demand side)	B2B content marketers, not designers.
Adobe: 47% report 51 to 200 people; 89% report three or more approval stages	Approvals	Chain length, not delay.
Filestage: eight days, over three versions	Approvals	Self-reported averages from a proofing-tool vendor.

Statistic	Bottleneck it speaks to	Use for your own diagnosis?
StreamWork: 74% say approvals take more effort than the creative work	Approvals	Opt-in survey; perceived effort.
BetterBriefs: 80% versus 10% on brief quality	Briefs	Opinion gap between groups.
BetterBriefs: 9 in 10 marketers say briefs change	Briefs	Frequency and cause unknown.
BetterBriefs: 33% budget waste	Briefs	Respondent estimate; not for a budget case without the caveat.

Table 2 shows that only one group of statistics (Superside, ANA, Adobe demand-side, Gartner, CMI) points at capacity, and each is about perceived strain at larger organisations. A team whose tally lands in C can reasonably cite them as context. A team whose tally lands in A or B should cite the approvals and briefs rows instead, and should not present a capacity statistic as evidence for a problem that sits elsewhere.

How to Cite a Vendor Survey Responsibly

A citation that carries its limits is more persuasive in a budget review than a bare number. A workable template is:

> "[Publisher] [year] survey of [n] [respondent profile], fielded [dates or 'dates not stated'], [commissioned by / run by]: [x]% [exact measure in the source's words]."

Applied to a row of the ledger: "Knak's 2026 survey of 333 enterprise marketing decision-makers in the US, UK and Canada (field dates not stated by Knak; trade coverage gives April 20 to May 18, 2026) found that 85% missed at least one campaign launch date in the prior 12 months because of workflow constraints."

Five caveats should travel with any vendor figure:

- **Publisher interest.** State whether the publisher sells something related to the finding.
- **Self-selection.** Opt-in panels and customer lists are not random samples. StreamWork's was an opt-in survey, and Knak's coverage says customers were included.
- **Enterprise skew.** Most respondents lead large organisations. Do not apply the figure to a ten-person team.
- **Estimate versus measurement.** "Respondents estimated" is not "waste was measured". Use the source's verb.
- **Date.** Give the year, and treat 2018 figures as historical.

Implications and Future Directions

For a team making a resourcing decision, the main implication is that the strongest-sounding statistics are the least decision-relevant. A figure like "85% missed a launch date" is real as a survey result but silent on cause for any one team. The more useful comparison is a team's own tally, which costs an hour and uses data no vendor can supply.

For publishers and analysts, the ledger approach suggests a practical standard: give the originator, sample, date and sponsor in the same sentence as the number. Several originators already publish the pieces; the gaps are usually fieldwork dates (Knak, Adobe, Superside Breakpoint) and calculation notes (the 33% waste estimate).

The evidence base itself is likely to shift. Adobe's April 2026 work with Advanis used a new survey of more than 400 creative professionals and more than 400 marketers, so Adobe's earlier figures describe an earlier sample (blog.adobe.com). Superside's 2026 report asks a different capacity question from its 2024 one, so a year-over-year comparison is not valid. Independent, non-sponsored measurement of approval time and brief-driven rework would fill the largest gap, and none was found in the sources opened.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How much time do marketers waste on creative approvals? No source opened here measures it directly. Adobe's survey (above) found 58% of respondents saying more than 40% of time goes to reviews and approvals, and Filestage reports an average review of eight days (filestage.io). Both are vendor surveys of self-reported perceptions.

What percent of marketers miss launch dates? Knak's survey reports that 85% missed at least one campaign launch date in 12 months (knak.com). The sample is 333 enterprise decision-makers, and the survey was commissioned by a software vendor.

What do creative team capacity statistics show? They show that leaders at large organisations report strain. Superside, Adobe, ANA, CMI and Gartner all report it in different wording, but none measures hours of work against hours available.

Is there a reliable statistic on bad creative briefs? The most traceable is BetterBriefs: 80% of marketers versus 10% of agencies rating briefs good, and 9 in 10 marketers saying briefs change. Both are opinion measures from BetterBriefs research (the 80% and 10% ratings were presented in 2021; the 9-in-10 figure is from the December 2023 global report).

How do poor briefs affect project delays? No source opened quantifies delay days from poor briefs. The BetterBriefs report records that 69% of marketers and 73% of agencies agree rebriefs happen too often.

What about in-house design team workload? ANA's 2023 survey of 162 members found 88% reporting that their in-house agency's workload had increased (ana.net), and work goes to external agencies primarily for bandwidth or capacity reasons (ana.net).

Are there creative project management statistics? Creative-specific ones are mostly vendor surveys. A general project-management reference is the PMI Pulse of the Profession 2017, which reported an average of US$97 million wasted for every US$1 billion invested (www.pmi.org). It is not creative-specific and is nearly a decade old.

Update Log and Retrieval Notes

- **2026-11-25:** Pages cited were opened on this date, except those listed below as not retrieved. Figures may be superseded by newer reports.
- **Not retrieved:** the Knak PDF, the Superside Overcommitted PDF, the StreamWork survey PDF, a Business Wire release for Superside, a mi-3 trade report and a Campaign Asia article. Rows that depend on them say so.
- **Unresolved:** whether the Knak PDF includes the email and Slack figure; the exact Superside demand-above-capacity percentage on the report page; whether a separate 2025 BetterBriefs brief-change dataset exists; the sample behind Adobe's October 2025 "48 percent" figure.
- **Next review:** re-check the ledger when Knak, Superside or Adobe publish new editions.

Conclusion

The statistics marketers repeat about creative strain are survey results with identifiable publishers, samples and dates, and the ledger shows how much of each is lost in repetition. Capacity figures describe leaders' perceptions at large organisations. Approval figures describe chain length and burden, with few measures of elapsed time. Brief figures rest mainly on BetterBriefs research, presented in 2021 and reported again in a December 2023 global report, of opinions and estimates. A responsible citation names the publisher, sample, date and sponsor interest, and uses the source's own verb.

For a team deciding what to buy, the practical step is the 20-request tally. If requests wait for a designer, capacity is the bottleneck and added design hours help. If they wait for reviewers or restart because of unclear direction, the fix is in sign-off ownership and briefing practice, and no external design supply will change that.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. https://knak.com/state-of-marketing-production
2. https://www.superside.com/reports/overcommitted-report
3. https://www.superside.com/blog/breakpoint
4. https://www.demandgenreport.com/industry-news/news-brief/knak-survey-finds-ai-hasnt-fixed-the-production-bottlenecks-behind-missed-launch-dates/53851
5. https://business.adobe.com/blog/71-percent-of-marketers-say-content-demand-to-increase-5x
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THE PUBLISHER

About Tapflare

Tapflare gives companies an on-demand design and web team for a flat monthly fee.

How it works

Each subscriber has a dedicated project manager who learns the brand, assigns every request to a senior specialist in that kind of work, and reviews the result before it is delivered. Requests are submitted and discussed in the Tapflare portal, each plan includes a daily allotment of design or development time, and the client keeps full ownership of the export and source files.

What it covers

Graphic design, custom illustration, presentation design, logos and brand guides, video editing and motion graphics, website and mobile-app mockups, and website development, from design mockups to HTML, to drag-and-drop builders or custom code.

What it is not

Tapflare is not a marketing agency, a media-buying, SEO or copywriting service, a software product or a freelance marketplace. Where a reader needs one of those, the honest answer is to say so.

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