



# How to Turbocharge Your Creative Team's Output



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# Introduction

Imagine a joyful world where creative production runs perfectly. A creative brief requesting visuals for a new campaign comes in. Everything your team needs to get started is there, from target audience to deadlines to mood boards. The project moves swiftly. Goals are decided. Everyone understands their role. Work is organized and easily accessible, with versions and discussions stored for future use and improvement. Stakeholder feedback is captured and addressed.

The campaign is delivered on time, the work is impressive, and the stakeholders' expectations have been exceeded. You nailed it.

Some creatives may call this a miracle, but this level of organization, efficiency, and execution is known as operational excellence — and it's possible.

When an organization reaches operational excellence, execution is flawless, from scoping and ideation to collaboration and final delivery. The end result is a win for the team, for the company, and most importantly for the customers.

**Teams operating at the highest levels of excellence can achieve a 75% increase in productivity and 25% increase in profitability.**

While operational excellence is achievable, it's difficult to attain without the right team, tactics, and technology in place. It requires significant investment from all parts of the organization. Commitment is particularly vital from mid-level managers, who are primarily responsible for driving improved execution within their team and throughout their organization.



It's clear that the results for those willing to invest in operational excellence are transformative. Harvard Business School conducted a major 15-year study of more than 12,000 companies in 34 countries which shows that teams operating at the highest levels of excellence can achieve a 75% increase in productivity and 25% increase in profitability.

The stakes for achieving operational excellence are especially high for larger teams of 20 or more. The bigger the team and the more complex the work, the bigger the challenge. There's a higher risk of silos forming and collaboration breaking down. Plus, there's the added pressure to deliver amazing results on a large volume and variety of projects.

Use this guide to help your growing creative team avoid these breakdowns in collaboration and become more productive. At Wrike, we've worked with thousands of successful creative teams who have scaled without sacrificing consistency or quality. We've distilled their insights into best practices that'll guide you on your journey towards operational excellence.





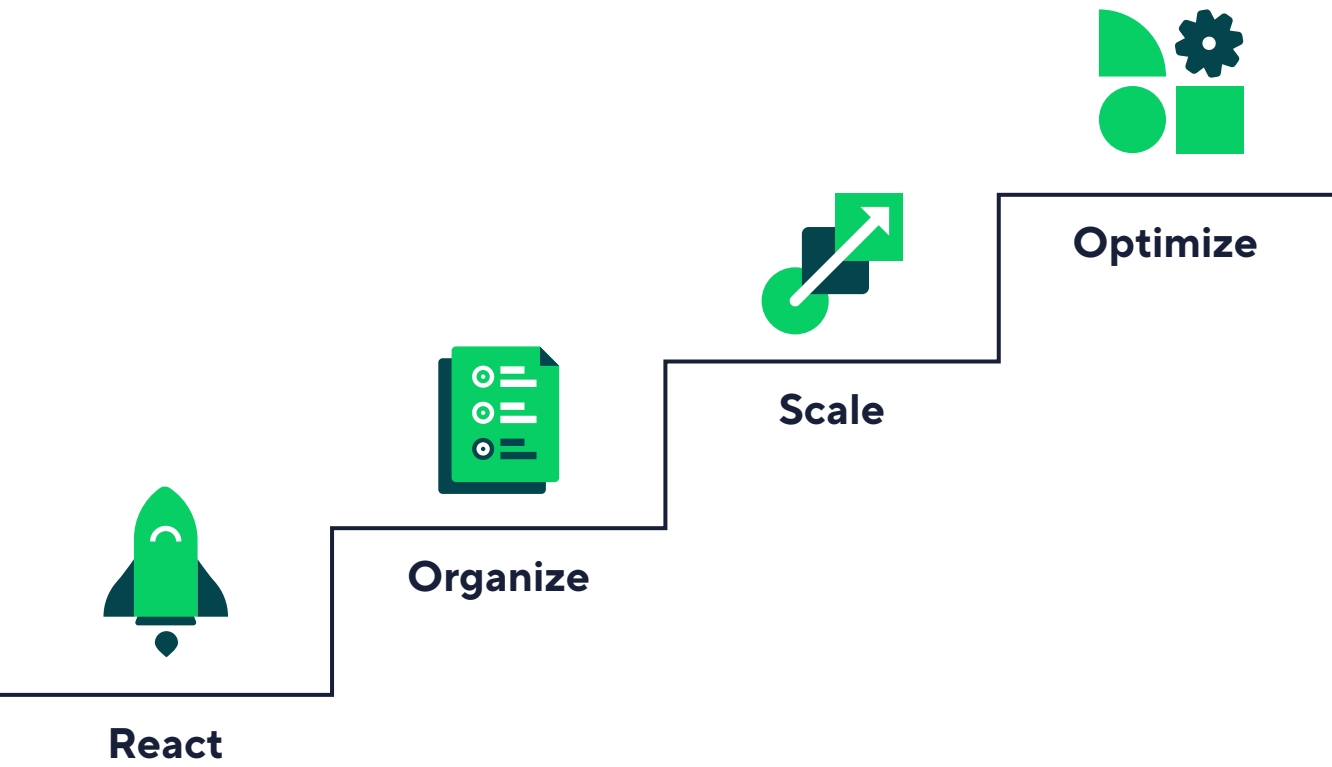
# Section 1

## Building Operational Excellence





Operational excellence isn't a destination — it's a journey. It can't be achieved at the snap of our fingers. It must be cultivated within an organization and continuously evaluated and iterated as new people, projects, and procedures come on board.



We've developed a maturity model that helps creative teams understand where they currently stand in their operational excellence journey and where they need to go next. Ultimately, this model can be broken down into four stages, as shown in the graphic above.



# React

In this stage, work is very unstructured, siloed, and ad hoc. That's because most teams have very few, if any, structured processes in place. Requests might come in via email, Slack, or even a tap on the shoulder. Projects are managed via email and spreadsheets, causing information to get lost easily and resulting in duplicates or even full reworks. Team roles and responsibilities are not defined, and sometimes there's so much noise it's hard to be truly creative.

**Reaction in action:** You get a new project request in your email. Key details are missing and then later captured in a spreadsheet, which is uploaded to a group chat. No one knows who is doing what. Two separate team members take on the same task and, unbeknownst to one another, both produce the same deliverable ... three days late.

# Organize

A single source of truth — a real-time repository for all information on a project — is established at this stage. Basic workflows are outlined for larger or more common projects. Communication is contained within this centralized workspace, and roles and responsibilities are defined. This makes it easier to dig into outcomes and progress with basic reporting and dashboards.

**Organization in action:** A request for a new logo is made. All the details are kept within the team's shared workspace. Tasks are assigned to team members based on their unique roles. All communication takes place within the workspace, facilitating handoffs and collaboration. The entire team maintains visibility and tracks progress using a shared dashboard.

# Scale

A team now has long-established and defined processes. Everything is managed within the designated workspace. To increase velocity and quality, recurring projects are automated and templated. Collaboration is extended outside of the immediate team to include other key stakeholders and teams. Reports are used to help balance workload and achieve set objectives.

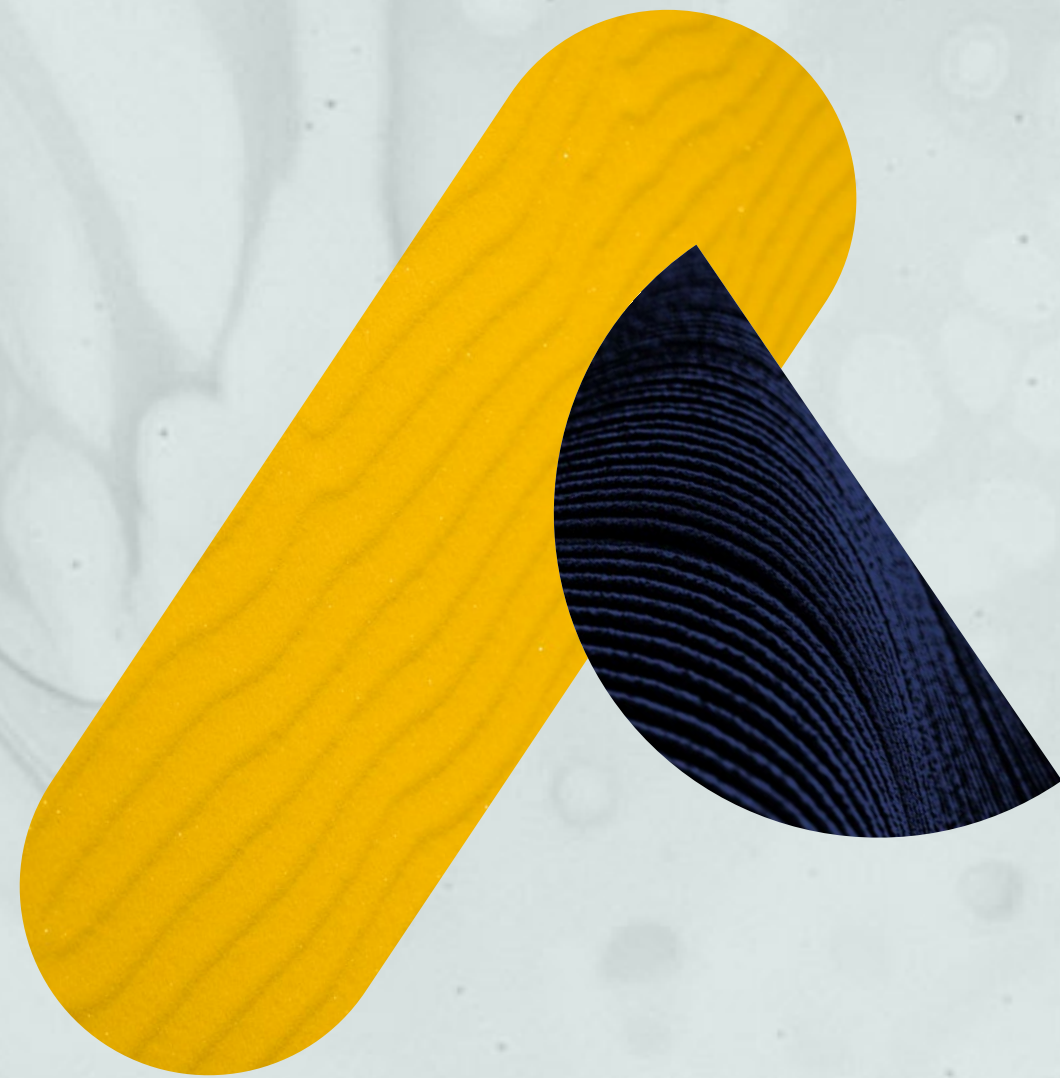
**Scaling in action:** A recurring request for a customer-facing guide comes in using a creative brief tailored to capture all of the information necessary. It's kicked off using a pre-existing template with the precise process steps in place to complete the guide. Since reporting reveals that a particular team member is short on bandwidth, another is assigned the project. Stakeholders can track the guide's progress and provide feedback in real time.

# Optimize

Congratulations, you've arrived! At this final stage, your team adopts a culture of excellence that eventually spreads throughout the company. More and more workers join the centralized workspace, which now incorporates cross-functional workflows and easy-access resources. Key applications like Adobe CC and DAM platforms are integrated with your workspace to further streamline work. Past performance data is used to estimate outcomes, create predictability, and drive coaching efforts.

**Optimization in action:** Think back to the example at the opening of this guide. Your team is now producing great content on time and within budget — easily. You're the picture of a team that's reached the Optimize stage on its journey to operational excellence!





## Paving the way to excellence

By now you're probably thinking, "this all sounds great, but where do I start and how do I make operational excellence happen for my growing team?"

Based on the work that 20,000+ [operationally excellent companies](#) like Airbnb, Sony Pictures, Nickelodeon, and L'Oreal have done with Wrike, we've determined there are four key disciplines that help companies achieve operational excellence:

- 1. Planning**
- 2. Process**
- 3. Collaboration**
- 4. Visibility**

Let's dig into each of these elements in more detail and explore some actionable tactics that creative teams can implement to move the needle. Keep in mind that each of these key disciplines feeds into and builds upon one another: they're strongest when developed together.

## Section 2

# Planning for Excellence





Small creative teams with a handful of stakeholders and projects often deal with ambiguity, shifting priorities, and last-minute deliverables. But teams of 20-plus can juggle dozens of high-profile projects each week, with each moving piece causing more complexity and inefficiency.

Poor planning has a domino effect. That’s why predictability is the bedrock of high-functioning teams. When planning with accelerating production in mind, it’s helpful to think of The Four W’s: Who, What, When, and Why.





# 1. Identify WHO Should Be Involved

While most creatives recognize the importance of planning within individual projects, growing teams must also realize the importance of planning across projects. That's why more operationally excellent teams are hiring a designated traffic or production manager who coordinates work across projects and teams.

A good production manager ensures projects are scoped and prioritized correctly and workload is balanced across team members. That means that time isn't wasted trying to find someone with sufficient bandwidth, handoffs are smooth, and deadlines are consistently met.

Each contributor on the creative team needs to have a defined role and set of responsibilities to balance workload and avoid duplicate work. Who owns illustrations versus motion graphics? Who is the lead designer for sales team decks, stakeholder requests, or a certain client account? Establishing roles is key to distributing and scheduling projects.

For example, digital marketing agency [Coma](#) uses Wrike to provide increased transparency and drive better, more fluid collaboration between team members: "We can now clearly see who is working on which tasks," says senior project manager Audrey Arfeuille. "Project progress is always visible, so we can plan the next working days very well, and we encounter fewer negative surprises."



## 2. Know WHAT You Need

A lack of information is the most fundamental roadblock for any project. The more requests you field, the harder it is to chase down these missing pieces, and it's easy to feel out of control.

Using a templated approach to your planning will help you better understand objectives and hit the ground running faster. For creatives, this means utilizing a standardized creative brief that effectively lays out all of the required information to complete a project — with no need for the usual over-and-back follow-up emails.

"I always encourage my clients to create templated creative briefs for each of their project types, like ad campaigns, eBooks, videos, etc.," says Roberto Wantland, operations expert and Strategic Customer Success Manager at Wrike. "Some work management tools like Wrike even make it possible to build out conditional request templates, where the questions dynamically change based on the information the requester provides as they fill out the brief. This allows you to ask the right questions that are most relevant to that specific client or project type."

## Creative Brief Questions

There is no "one-size-fits-all" creative brief, but here are some key questions every creative brief should help answer:

- What are the parameters of the project? (i.e., timeline, budget, format, dimensions, etc.)
- Who is the audience for this project? (i.e., demographics, concerns, desires, etc.)
- What is the main message or tone that the requester wants to get across? What feeling do they want the audience to get from the finished product?
- Are there any examples of visuals that inspire the requester? Is there a certain style they want to convey?
- Who is the competition? Do they have similar assets? How should this project be different?
- What is the goal of this project? Is there a specific action that the requester wants the end user to take? (i.e., request a demo, make a purchase, watch a video, etc.)
- Is there a particular metric that will be used to gauge the success of this initiative? (i.e., sales, clicks, downloads, etc.)
- Who is responsible for approving this project? Is anyone else's input required?



### Advanced technique

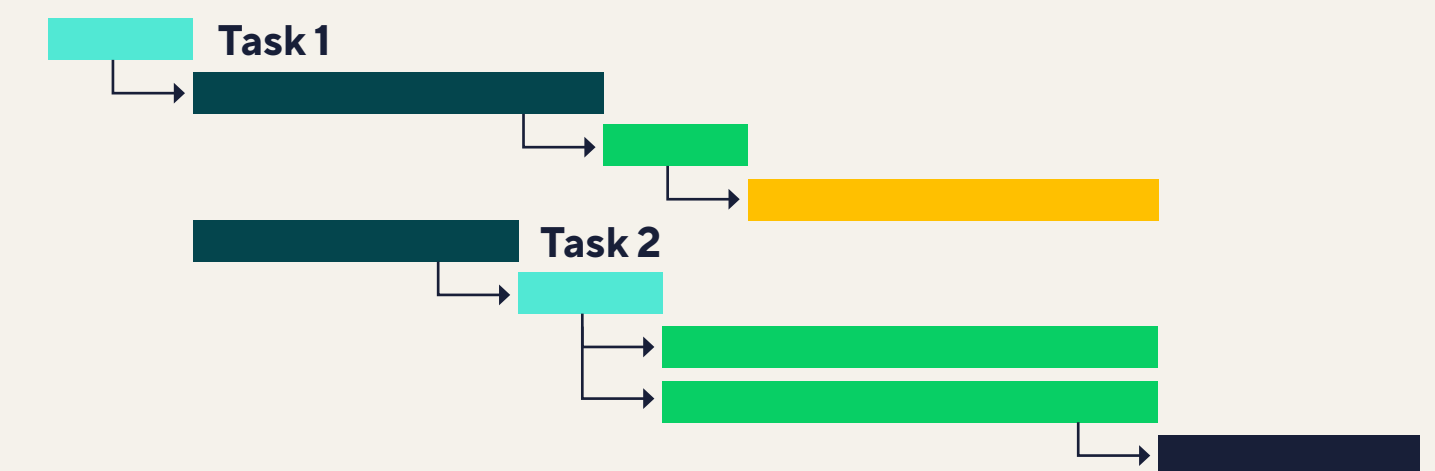
As planning scales, it's extremely important to make sure everyone speaks the same language to avoid confusion and enable accurate reporting.

Do you refer to “requests” as “briefs”, “eBooks” as “Guides”, or “projects” as “campaigns”? Are deadlines written out month/day/year or day/month/year? For companies using a collaborative work management system, creating custom naming conventions is a great way to ensure that information is captured and communicated in a consistent and uniform fashion.

Wrike has brought this to a whole new level with [Custom Item Types](#), a game changer for work management in the creative industry. With Custom Item Types in the Wrike platform, you can build a workspace tailored to your role, department, or industry.

## 3. Visualize WHEN Projects Are Due

Deadlines are nothing new for creatives. But juggling competing due dates with multiple dependencies and limited headcount in a pressurized environment is extra challenging — leading to some managers struggling to see their teams' work. The solution? Simpler than you might think. Track projects in a timeline or calendar view to visualize which initiatives are in flight and coming in the pipeline. This helps your team more effectively prioritize, assign, and schedule tasks.



A calendar or timeline view is also beneficial when reviewing finished projects. As your team completes work, you'll learn how long it takes to produce specific types of projects and which team members work faster than others. You can then use this information when budgeting time, allocating resources, and committing to deadlines in the future.



## 4. Understand WHY Things Are Being Done

Copy and design is more than form — it's also function. If you don't know the purpose of your work, you'll likely miss the target. As mentioned earlier, be sure your creative briefs leave room for requesters to provide desired outcomes and success metrics.

For project-based teams, creative briefs can also be rolled up into a statement of work (SOW) that clearly outlines your project deliverables. SOWs serve as your team's commitment to your requester and can be helpful in understanding why certain milestones must be met.

Ultimately, knowing the "why" behind each of your requests empowers your team to prove the success of its work. Capturing data around projects' key performance indicators (KPIs) will help everyone measure the achievement not just of stakeholder satisfaction, but also of business outcomes. This information is invaluable when planning future projects.

## Planning for the unplanned

An essential part of planning is leaving space for the unplanned. The dynamic nature of work, creativity, and relationships requires you to expect the unexpected.

Here are some best practices to help you master the art of planning for the unplanned:

- **Never finalize your plan.** Instead, view it as a work in progress. This is as much psychological as it is practical; it prevents attachment to the status quo.
- **Revisit your plan frequently.** Depending on the type of work you do, you should plan to replan every few days or weeks to stay on-course for operational excellence.
- **Make sure you have a "replanning" agreement upfront with stakeholders.** Set the expectation with stakeholders that things may change. This will make your replanning more effective and reduce the potential for frustration.
- **Keep everything up to date.** Whatever tool or system you put in place to help manage your plan, make sure that it's easy to update and adapt in real time as your plan evolves.

## Section 3

# Adhering to a Process





It's no secret many creatives view rigid processes as secondary, or even damaging, to creativity. But the reality is that inconsistent, ineffective processes cause missed deadlines, confusion, and redundancies — all of which hamper creativity. In fact, a [2021 survey](#) of 400 creatives showed that 19% spent only one-third of their day doing creative work!

Process, like planning, becomes increasingly critical as teams grow. Think of it like the old “Gold Master LPs.” These were the metal records from which thousands, sometimes millions, of vinyl records were created. Once you have a solid “mold,” you can crank out many projects much faster than if you had to continuously start from scratch.

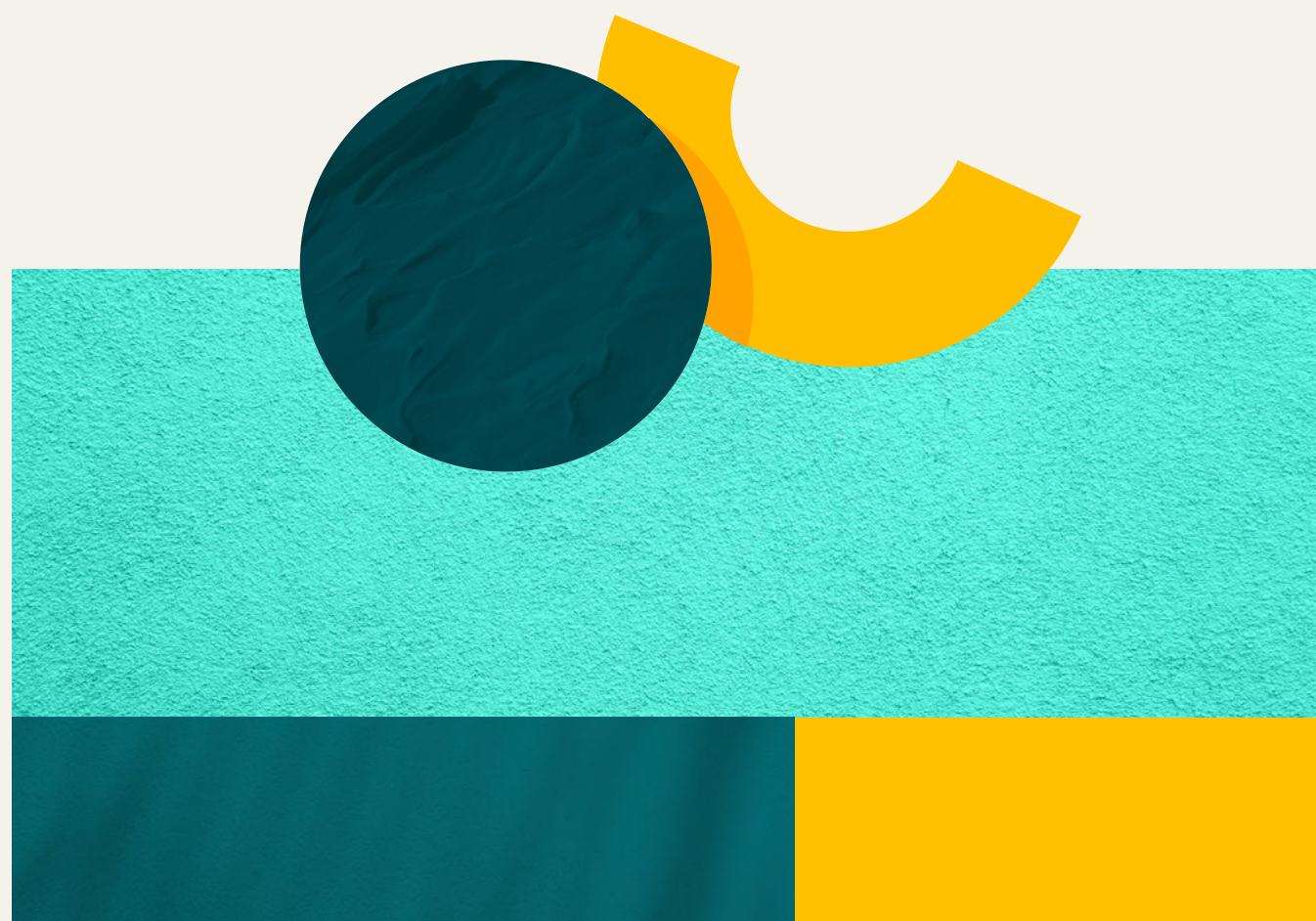


For many years, we never focused on operations. As a creative team, we thought that making things look pretty was good enough, but this, in fact, wasn't the case. We needed to take a hard look at our systems and processes ... By improving our processes, not only did our team's morale increase, but we now produce more beautiful and higher quality end products.

[Chee Wei, Art/Creative Department Executive Director](#)  
[@HobbyLobby](#)

## First things first: Documenting your creative process

Before you start refining your processes or putting new ones in place, you must understand what is and isn't working. If you think that your team doesn't have any processes, think again! A lack of process is essentially its own (disorganized) process





Input (What is being done?)	Action (Who is responsible?)	Output (What is the outcome?)
Request submitted via email	Stakeholder	Creative brief created
Assign a designer	Traffic manager	N/A
Comp is created using Sketch	Designer	Design draft uploaded to Box
Design is reviewed	Design manager/Stakeholder	Revisions provided

There are two effective ways to document your existing process(es):

**1. Input/action/output chart:** This technique works for teams with fewer, more linear, and moderately complex processes. It will help you better understand your team’s activities, how each task is linked to the next, and who is involved in each step. Above is an example of a partially filled-out input/action/output chart.

**2. Process mapping:** For teams with a greater volume and complexity of projects, it’s not enough to understand each step within a process or who is responsible. They must also prioritize these projects while coordinating with other teams and their interests.

Process mapping is an advanced technique that can help. Teams start with an inventory of their current projects and deliverables. Next, these items are prioritized according to impact. From there, processes are outlined by identifying their triggers (starting points) and deliverables (endpoints). Specific steps are then listed to connect the dots between the two.

This exercise helps you visualize how information flows in your organization. It shines a spotlight on inefficiencies like duplicated efforts, poor communication, ineffective feedback loops, and so much more.



1. Inventory current processes, projects, and deliverables



3. Identify triggers (starting points) and deliverables (end points)



2. Prioritize your activities according to impact



4. List the steps that are needed to get from trigger to deliverable



**Pro tip: If you find yourself struggling to document your process using either of the above techniques, try working backwards. Start with the project deliverable, and reverse engineer your process to see how you got there.**

Once you've documented your existing process(es), consider the following key areas for improvement.

## Choosing a single source of truth

How do project requests come in? Where does information live? Where are files stored? If you're like most creative teams, your answers probably range from email to Excel to Dropbox.

The more projects you have, the harder it is to manage information, assets, and versions. This is why you must identify a single source of truth before you can tackle any process roadblocks. This usually involves saying goodbye to a cluttered tech stack and choosing one powerful collaborative workspace to collect all of your project-related information and assets.

Wrike's ground-breaking [Dark Matter of Work](#) research highlighted just how vital it is for modern companies to focus on establishing a single source of truth — one that can manage complex workflows while remaining easily accessible. Nearly 100% of knowledge workers polled confirmed that a single source of truth would greatly reduce stress while ensuring their work and accomplishments are recognized.



International services provider Kalexius chose Wrike as their single source of truth, as it gives their organization a centralized hub for project management, file storage, and collaboration. That means 50% less time in status meetings and 20% less time spent searching for documents and information.

“Wrike gives us a sense of control,” says Stella Petersen, Head of Legal Operations. “We have a record and visibility of everything that’s being done, and we can make sure that we’re utilizing all our resources at 100%.”



#### **Advanced technique:**

The best work management solutions further streamline and store information by connecting to the tools teams already use, like Gmail, Adobe Creative Suite, Box, and Slack.

## Transitioning from “To Do” to “How To”

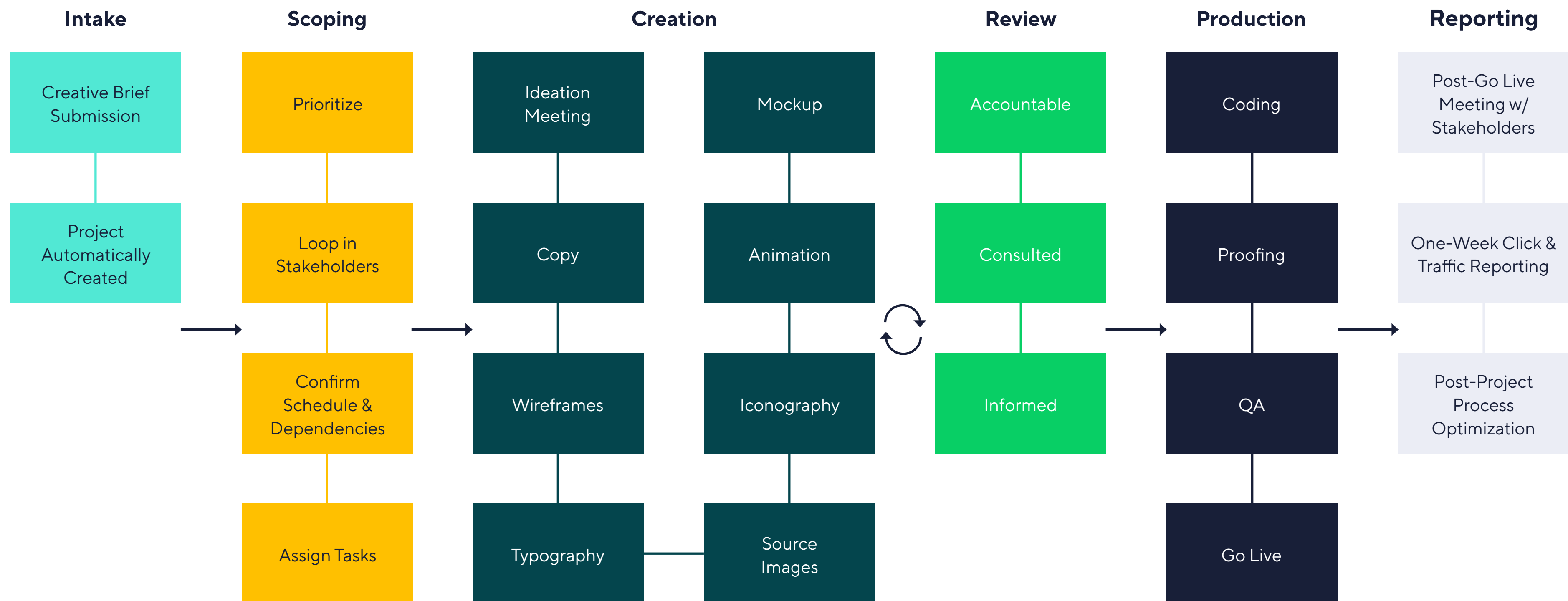
Process is all about execution. The best way to get started is to group individual tasks into “chunks” of work needed to complete a project or achieve a goal.

While every team’s processes are comprised of different tasks and subtasks, here are some units of work that function as key elements in most creative processes:

- Request intake/creative brief
- Scoping of project or deliverable
- Creative exploration
- Proofing and approvals
- Production
- Reporting

These chunks of work can be built out based on your team’s unique structure, stakeholders, and deliverables. One of the most common ways to structure your processes is by project type, such as video, email campaign, or web design. Here’s a process example for a web page design:





## Workflow

**New** → **Scheduled** → **In Progress** → **In Review** → **Approved** → **Complete** → **On Hold**

Note that the units of work in this process are marked by a particular workflow with task statuses such as “New,” “In Progress,” or “Approved.” Defining these statuses in a way that makes sense for your projects

is an instrumental piece of the process. They help keep everyone on the same page and signify when it’s time to move on to the next task or “chunk.”





### Advanced technique: Templatizing

Solid creative processes can get very detailed.

Saving time-consuming processes (like the web page design example above) as templates within your work management platform enables you to clone them. Rather than starting projects from scratch, key components like dependencies, task duration, assignees, and reports are copied over.

Templatized processes save high-performance teams a ton of time, freeing resources for more complex or custom projects, and driving repeatable wins for your team.



### Advanced technique: Automation

Another way that operationally excellent teams streamline their processes is through automation. This includes automatic project creation when a creative brief is submitted, intelligent routing to the right person based on project requirements, and the receipt of real-time work notifications.

For example, to help scale creative production across 50 cities worldwide, Kim's team at Airbnb has automated its processes as much as possible. Project requests are created in Salesforce, which integrates with middleware platform Azuqua. Once a request is received, Azuqua sends an automated project request to Wrike and automatically attaches relevant information and the proper assignees to tasks.

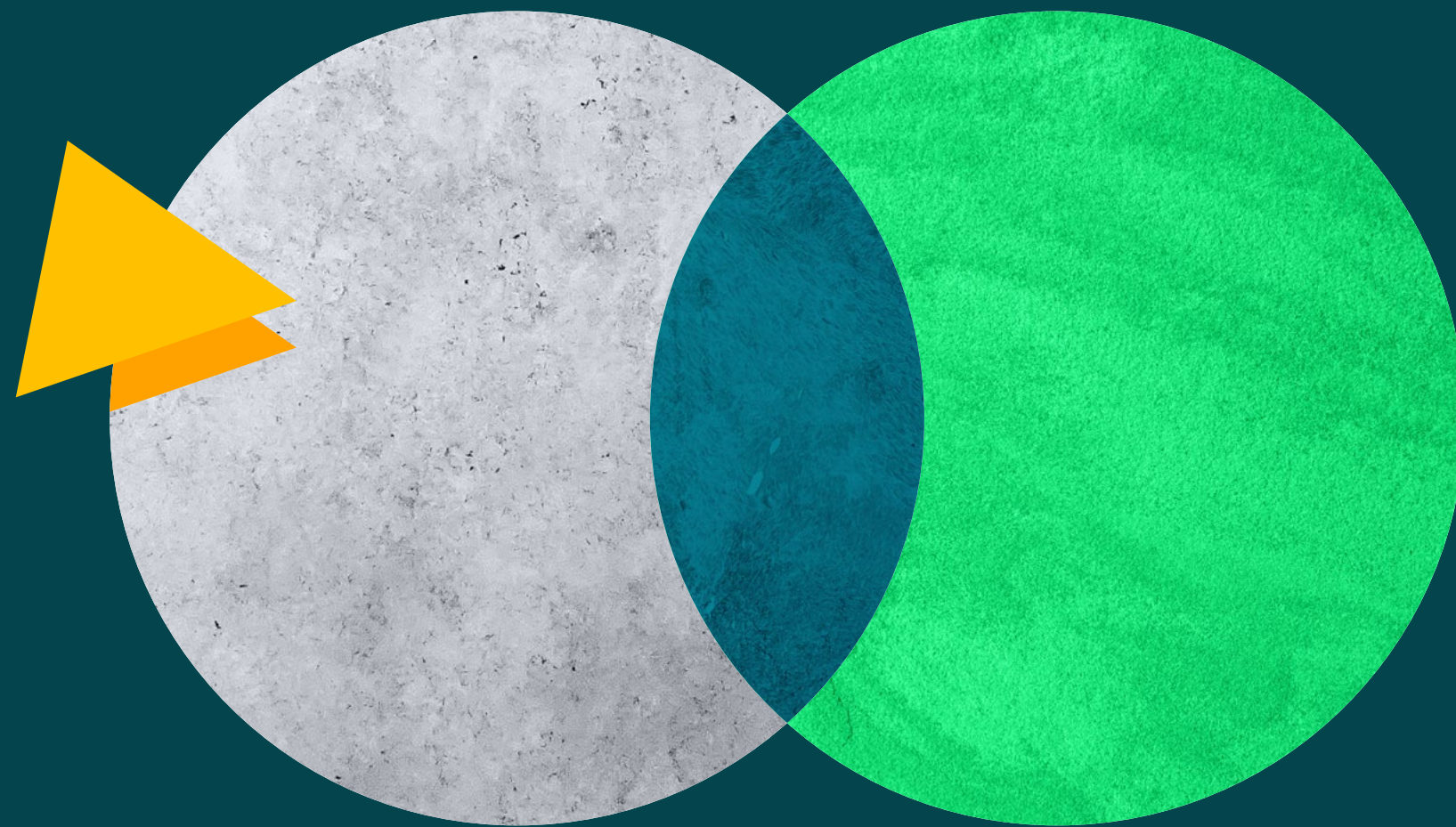
## The importance of iteration

Much like the journey to operational excellence, a great process is never finished. Rather, it's continuously refined and optimized based on new projects, people, and discoveries. As operations expert and Wrike customer advocate Adler Chan explains, "The need to iterate and optimize your processes points back to the importance of having a single source of truth for all of your initiatives. Only then is it possible to look back and accurately analyze and improve existing processes based on past performance."



## Section 4

# Breaking Down Silos





Creative teams can include a wide range of contributors such as videographers, photographers, web designers, UX designers, and other specialized roles who must work together. Creatives must also communicate with their internal stakeholders as well as collaborate with their external clients.

You'll notice an even greater need to work together as your team scales. Complex, high-stakes initiatives require greater alignment and oversight than ever before.

Without strong collaboration, things can quickly erode. The more your team grows, the more difficult collaboration becomes. The explosion of projects and a growing remote workforce has added extra layers of complexity to every organization, which often causes employees to work at cross-purposes.

Before you know it, teamwork can go from inspiring to burdensome, consuming your workday and leaving little time for creativity. Wrike's Dark Matter of Work research indicates that time wasted on activities such as repeating work that's already been done, attending unproductive meetings, or following up on actions and statuses costs enterprises millions — a figure [set to rise to \\$93m by 2027](#).



**A 2022 [Gallup survey](#) found that 8 in 10 people were working fully remote or in a hybrid situation, while only 2 in 10 were entirely on-site.**

To overcome this catch-22, operationally excellent creative teams are using proven tactics and technologies that facilitate seamless, real-time collaboration across their team, key stakeholders, and the entire organization.



# Define roles and responsibilities

The first step to effective collaboration is defining who should be doing what – otherwise, you could end up with too many cooks in the kitchen. This will eliminate a lot of the confusion and back-and-forth that comes with too many contributors.

Here are a [few popular frameworks](#) you can use to make this happen:

## RACI

The letters in this model stand for Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed. Team members designated as “responsible” are those in charge of doing the work to complete the task at hand. The “accountable” role oversees and approves the task. “Consulted” team members provide input and help ensure the successful completion of the task, while those in the “Informed” bucket are kept in the loop, with no work required.

## CAIRO

The CAIRO framework is an expanded and restructured version of RACI. The additional letter “O” stands for “omitted” to help define those with zero project involvement and clearly differentiate them from the “informed.”

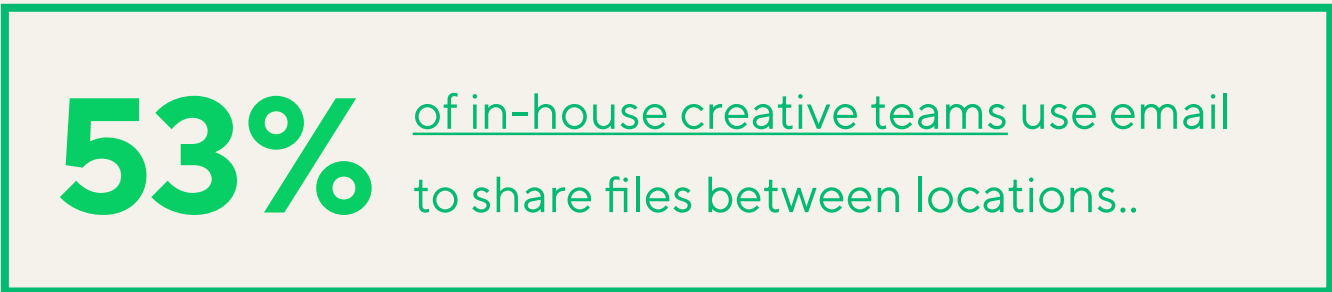
## DACI

DACI stands for Driver, Approver, Contributor, and Informed. Only one person can be the “driver” – the key stakeholder and ultimate decision maker. The “approver” provides feedback and oversees the success of the project, while “contributors” do the majority of the hands-on work. Finally, the “informed” role is the same as in the RACI and CAIRO frameworks.



# Say goodbye to email

While email may work for a team of five or six, larger groups will find themselves lost in a sea of convoluted threads. There’s also no guarantee they’ll be opened in a timely fashion.



New collaboration tools exist that power real-time interaction and aid in organizing feedback. The ability to assign tasks, specify reviewers and approvers, and @ mention other users are a few examples of how a work management platform can help ensure feedback is given at the right time, in the right order.

For instance, as the creative team at [Umpqua Bank](#) expanded rapidly, forgotten emails, lost revisions, and wasted time became a problem. Transitioning communication to Wrike’s centralized workspace improved collaboration between vendors, stakeholders, and team members.



“I’m able to tap them into jobs at the beginning of a project, so they have a heads-up that something is coming down the pipeline,” explains Natasha Jones, Creative Services Production Manager. “We can collaborate in the beginning, and we can troubleshoot before things go off the rails.”

## Consolidate feedback

When multiple people comment on a project, feedback collects across notebooks, inboxes, and spreadsheets. Consolidating all of this input can quickly become a full-time job. This is why all project feedback and discussion should reside in a single repository that everyone can access in real time — a single source of truth (see [Planning](#)).



### Advanced technique

Companies in the early phases of operational excellence may collaborate only around project deliverables and task details. As you progress further in your journey, start recording ideation, meeting outcomes, and postmortems to facilitate complete collaboration.

## Give them some space

Collaboration is paramount, but no team or employee works exactly the same. Whatever work management platform you choose should be flexible enough to allow teams and individual contributors to work the way they want, encouraging buy-in from every member.

A few features to search for include:

- **Multiple views of the same project.** Not everyone organizes their work in lists. Some prefer timelines, while others relate better to tables.
- **Personal project spaces.** Team members are far more likely to adopt a work management solution if they can also track and manage their own personal projects.
- **Custom workflows and templates.** While “In Revisions” is a perfectly sensible project status for creative teams, it doesn’t necessarily work for technical teams.

# Create a how-to guide

Regardless of the tools or tactics you choose to foster collaboration, it's important to define and document protocols for working and excelling within this system. Make sure this how-to guide is readily available to new and existing employees and customers.

While the specifics will vary based on your team, here are some general questions that your guide should answer:

- What responsibility framework do you use (RACI, etc.), and what does each of the roles entail?
- Is there a certain amount of time your team needs to respond to requests? What are your average project turnaround times?
- Do different teams or customers have different workflows and project statuses? If so, what are they?
- Are there any integrations available?





## Section 5

# Bringing Visibility to Performance



When managing a few people or projects, it's easy to keep all the details in your head. Project details are practically absorbed through osmosis as team members attend meetings and overhear office conversations. But once teams reach the 20+ threshold, visibility must be actively sought out to be achieved.

If you're going to ferret out issues and resolve them quickly, you must have a complete picture of your work and define and capture all your project requirements, including roles and responsibilities, deadlines, goals, dependencies, target audience, etc. This allows your team to continually improve and optimize your processes. Teams that master the discipline of visibility can anticipate problems before they happen.

The single source of truth is the first and most important step toward having visibility. It's impossible to see where things lie when projects, deadlines, feedback, and files are scattered across platforms.

Once you have overall visibility, you can create dashboards, reports, and metrics to gain actionable insight into your performance.

## Measure progress

Start with evaluating the progress of your projects. If you've built a basic process with corresponding workflow statuses, this should be fairly easy. According to operations expert and Wrike Strategic Customer Success Manager Roberto Wantland, one of the best ways to maintain visibility into work progress is through dashboards.

"One of the first things I do to help my clients maintain visibility into their work is to set up a shared dashboard that shows the status of all active project tasks and when they are due," he explains. "This helps managers assess progress and identify any red flags in a single glance, and works to keep contributors on pace."

## Forecast resources and timeline

Once you have a clear view of progress, determine exactly how much time your team is spending on work. Measure how long your team takes to complete different types



of projects (i.e., digital ad versus print), as well as how much time they spend working on requests from specific clients or departments.

This enables you to more accurately estimate delivery time and define the complexity of particular types of requests. This leads to improved capacity planning and load balancing, and also empowers managers to make the case for additional headcount when necessary.

## Assess quality & prove value

Establishing and recording goals at the outset of projects allows creative teams to reflect on the success of their work. Were these goals achieved? To what extent? What can you do better next time? To make sure this evaluation takes place, record postmortem notes directly in your work management solution. In addition, bake a review step into your process.

When projects are successful, teams can use this data as proof of value. This is especially key for creative teams, which are typically viewed as cost centers. For example,

Premier Sotheby's International Realty's marketing team

manages its projects and processes in Wrike. This allows them a review process where they can revisit a project, demonstrate their department's hard work, and justify decisions.

"When you're working with 900 individual personalities and independent contractors, being able to prove your value is crucial," says Christina Anstett, Sotheby's Direct Marketing Specialist. "Pulling a report and showing them how many jobs were completed on their behalf during a certain time frame is very, very powerful for us."

**Incomplete project briefs and not being considered a true partner are among the top five challenges for in-house creative leaders.**



### Advanced technique: Identify bottlenecks

If you're using a workspace that effectively captures all the metadata around your projects and processes, you should be able to run a report for projects with missed deadlines or unmet objectives. Next, look for any commonalities between these initiatives. Did they involve a particular asset type or creative brief? Are projects getting stuck in the same process step? Are certain team members always involved? Answering these questions allows you to spot and address any bottlenecks negatively impacting performance.





## Section 6

# Establishing a Culture of Excellence



Operational excellence isn't a quick fix for teams struggling with collaboration or process. It isn't a bandage for poor planning and performance, or something that can be achieved solely with a new software or service. It's a way of life — a movement that requires a cultural shift within your company.

You can't come to the office Monday morning and demand your team be operationally excellent. Instead, you must commit to nurturing this way of thinking as your team and projects scale.

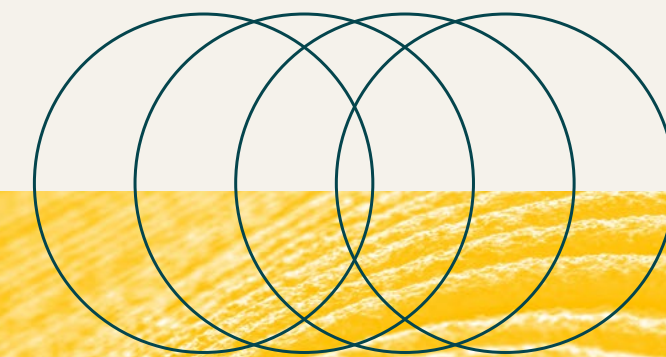
Here are a few steps you can take to cultivate a culture of excellence at your company:

**1. Mandate for change.** Elect (or be!) a champion committed to shepherding and encouraging the team along this journey. Ideally, this champion will have executive support and a clear mandate. Having buy-in from the top of the organization can make the difference between long-term success or fast failure.

**2. Get support from below.** Despite buy-in from above, those on the front lines of the business can be resistant

to change. Helping team members see the personal value of operational excellence is more effective than any mandate from higher up. The data from [HBR's 15-year study](#) is clear: Teams that achieve operational excellence are happier, produce higher quality work, and have better work/life balance.

**3. Make it a habit.** Transformation requires creating and nurturing new habits. Establish a weekly planning and review meeting where everyone looks at a single source of truth for work. Discuss what works and what doesn't. Start optimizing smaller daily tasks and weekly processes. This ritual teaches team members to become stewards of operational excellence.



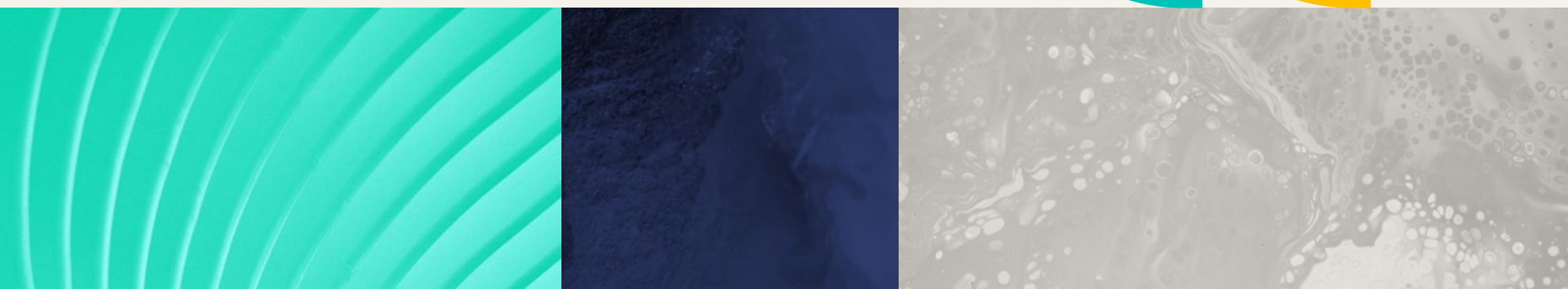


Creating a culture committed to embracing continuous improvement breeds lasting, meaningful change for your team and the organization at large.

The speed and quality of your work increases. Communication and trust between teammates strengthens. And most importantly, your customers' experiences improve.

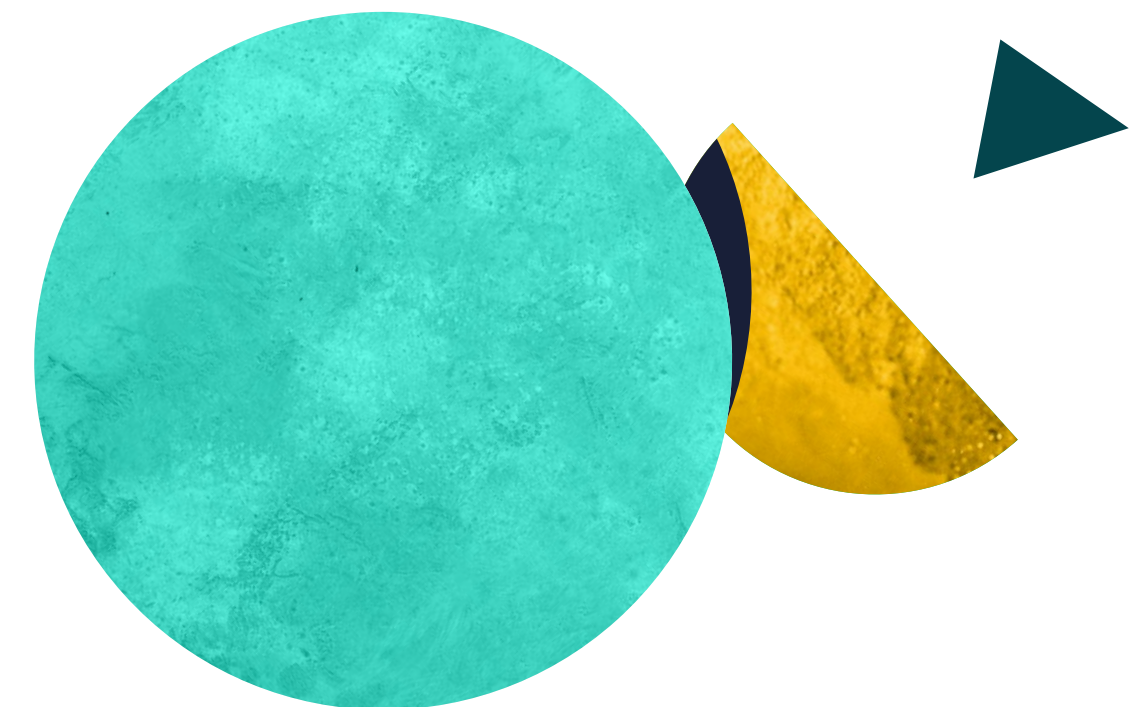
You've taken the first steps to operational excellence by reading this guide. Now is the time to make your way from React, to Organize, to Scale, to Optimize. Focus on planning, process, collaboration, and visibility to illuminate your path to productivity.

Wrike has helped companies like Sony Pictures, Nickelodeon, Premier Sotheby's International Realty, and Hootsuite achieve Operational Excellence, and we can help you too.



With Wrike, creative teams can:

- Minimize fire drills, missed deadlines, and unmet objectives
- Increase creative output while improving quality and consistency
- Establish a single source of truth for all project materials
- Communicate and share feedback in real-time
- Discover opportunities to improve the creative process





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