

HOW INTEGRATED PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIPS HELP BRANDS ACHIEVE MORE FOR LESS

**MEDIA
MONKS**

DEFINING THE INTEGRATED PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIP	04
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JUGGLING LOCAL RELEVANCY AND CONSISTENCY WITH AN INTEGRATED PRODUCTION PARTNER	14
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CONNECT WITH A BRAND AMBASSADOR ALIGNED TO YOUR STRATEGIC, LONG-TERM GOALS	22
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BUILDING A COMMITTED, YET FLEXIBLE, LONG-TERM PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIP	28
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PLAN FOR SUCCESS WITH AN INTEGRATED PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIP	36
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01



DEFINING THE INTEGRATED PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIP

These days, everyone wants more for less. And there's good reason for it: in our world, consumers demand a continuous stream of personalized, relevant content that brands struggle to keep up with and satiate. This challenge can manifest in ways both simple (delivering the right content to the right audience) to organizationally complex (retaining local relevancy in global messaging). Whether it's procurement hoping to save costs, a CMO's desire to protect the brand or creatives tangled up in inefficient workflows, all levels of an organization seek to do things faster, better and smarter.

To meet these needs, a new setup emerged: the integrated production partnership. This setup between brands, creative and production companies responds to brands' needs for faster, cost-effective content without sacrificing impact by designating dedicated teams fixed on brands' unique challenges. Teams may be small and focused, but the close nature of the relationship provides access to a wider production toolkit when new opportunities or unexpected challenges arise. This way, clients receive the resources and talent necessary for remaining stable in our changing digital landscape.

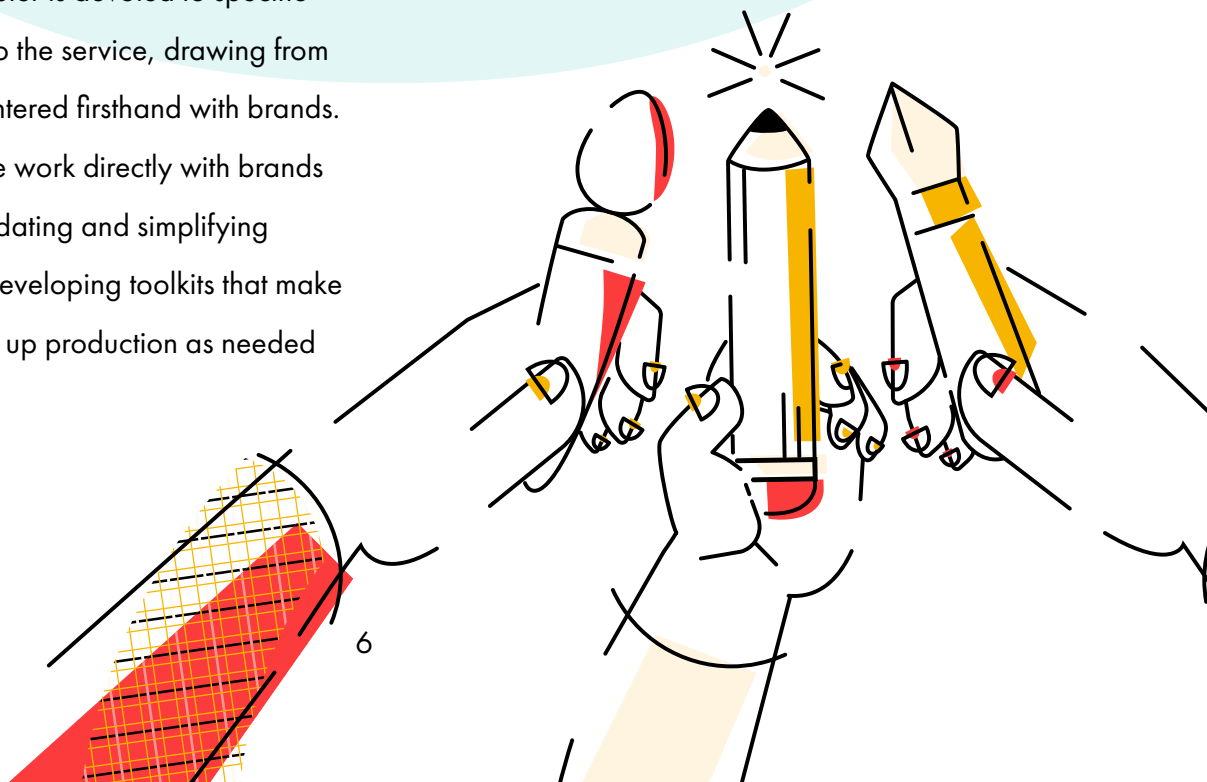
You'll also learn:

- How such a partnership enables efficiency
- How to scale production with rapid turnaround times
- The benefits of a brand ambassador
- What to consider before jumping into a production partnership

This guide to integrated production partnerships aims to impart some of the lessons, opportunities and challenges we've identified when working closely with brands facing universal operational challenges to succeed in new opportunities.

Integrated production partnerships respond to key brand needs without sacrificing impact.

Through these pages, you'll learn the ins and outs of the integrated production partnership and how it works. Each chapter is devoted to specific challenges or benefits to the service, drawing from scenarios we've encountered firsthand with brands. Common challenges we work directly with brands to solve include consolidating and simplifying bloated workstreams, developing toolkits that make assets reusable, scaling up production as needed and more.



WORKING FASTER, BETTER, SMARTER

With the increasingly personalized nature and delivery of digital content, it feels like everyone is in crunch mode. According to the 2019 SoDA Global Digital Outlook Report, of which MediaMonks co-founder [Wesley ter Haar served](#) as editor-in-chief, 63% of client-side marketing leaders say producing and publishing targeted digital content is a major priority for their business¹—and so is producing that content more quickly.

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While producing timely, always-on content is a critical need for organizations, a significant portion of them face challenges in meeting that output. In the 2018 Digital Trends for Creative and Design Leaders Survey, over a third of organizations designing creative experiences internally faced challenges in finding and retaining the right people with the right skills, while 40% cited outdated workflows as slowing their progress.² These problems together make a one-two punch that makes it difficult for organizations to successfully develop the stream of targeted content they know they need, keeping it tantalizingly out of reach.

In addition to taking up time, the cyclical nature of the old-agency model isn't as effective as it used to be. Rather than focus a big idea on traditional media and move out from that, standing out in today's digital landscape requires an always-on flow of targeted content across platforms that build toward your creative direction. In essence, the new era requires highly relevant content that continues to deliver a consistent message—something that 59% of marketers say they have difficulty with.³ This requires organizations to seek out new organizational and executional methods.

¹ "Trends Shaping Tomorrow," SoDA Global Digital Outlook, 2019"

² "Digital Trends for Creative and Design Leaders Survey," Adobe, 2018

³ "State of Creative and Marketing Collaboration Survey," Adobe, 2018

Through establishing an integrated production partnership, we set up organizations with a team custom-built for achieving their specific needs, whether that be access to a dedicated, decorated talent pool; locally relevant content across the globe; fresh content triggers or alleviating the brand studio's bandwidth. "Organizations are bringing more capabilities in-house at a time where there's an increased need for content at-scale," says MediaMonks co-founder Wesley ter Haar. "With integrated production partnerships, we're able to provide the resources needed to meet the demand for always-on content and relevancy to their audiences."

An integrated team makes for a simple, scalable way to produce day-to-day content while allowing room for the bigger projects or needs that crop up from time to time. With an in-house setup that connects to top talent across the globe, an integrated team functions as an always-on talent studio capable of delivering an unprecedented amount of flexibility and production with a rapid turnaround time not seen before.

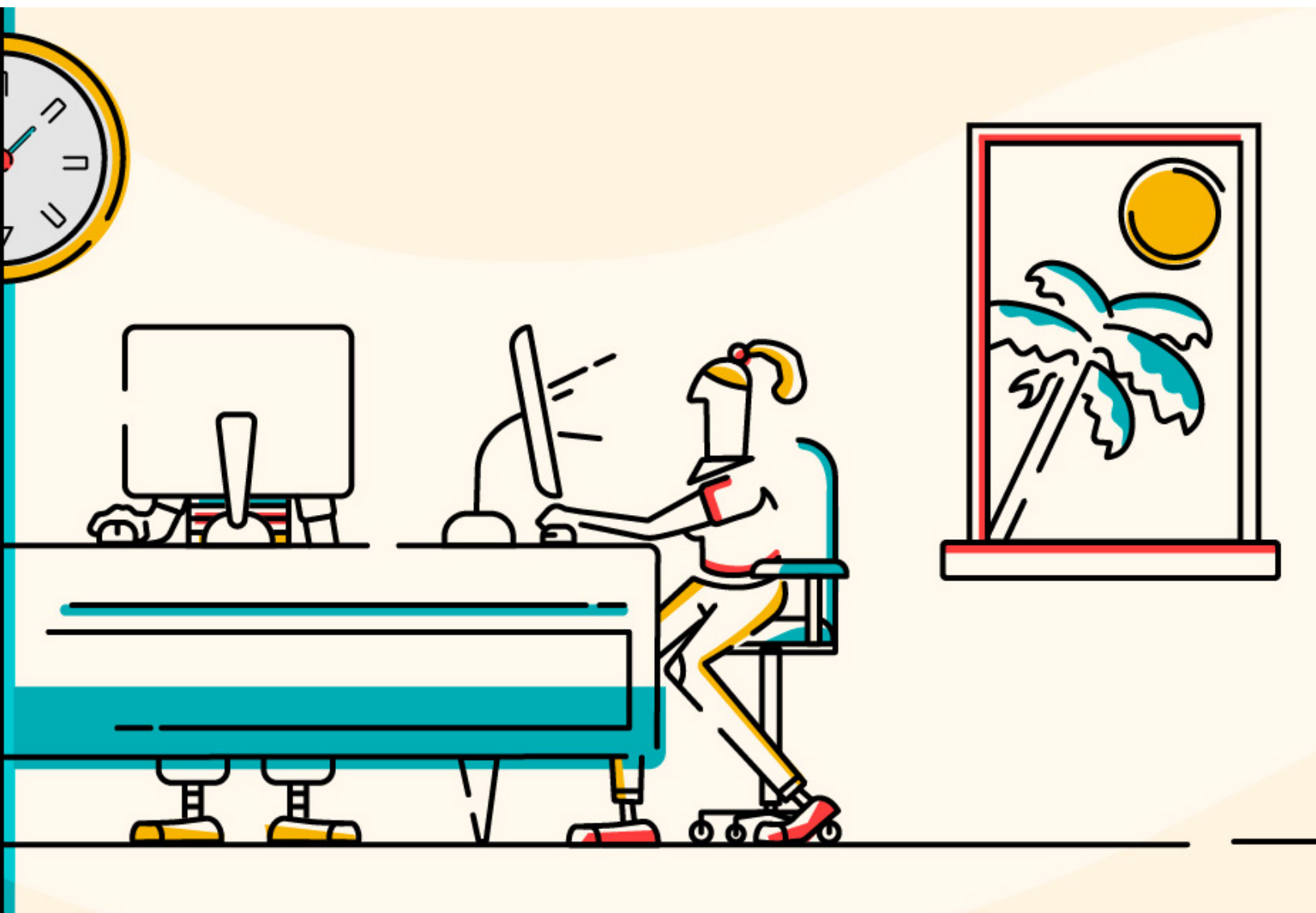


Benefits to working with an integrated team include:

- A team of world-class talent custom-built to your organization's needs
- Direct, immediate access to a leading partner's capabilities—even those outside of your pre-defined, day-to-day operations
- A streamlined, efficient workflow with fast turnaround times
- An outside perspective capable of safeguarding your brand

Over a third of organizations designing creative experiences internally have trouble finding and retaining talent. Outdated workflows slow down progress for 40% of organizations designing creative experiences in-house.⁴

⁴ "Artificial Intelligence Will Spark A Real Marketing Renaissance," Forrester Research, Inc., Aug 3 2018



DIVE INTO THE DEEP END OF THE TALENT POOL

A key benefit to the integrated team model is total access to a diverse talent pool, which encompasses both the skills you need for day-to-day operations as well as specific talent needed for one-off projects or last-minute asks. We house all modern digital trades, which give us the ability to look at client needs holistically before tapping into a varied set of skills available to accomplish them. “This process goes beyond pure production,” says Louise Martens, Executive Producer at MediaMonks.

For example, we have one partner whose primary need is to create print-based materials and assets. To meet this need, we set them up with a team of dedicated designers that can easily deliver those materials in a fast turnaround time. But when the same partner needed an animation done as a one-off project, a team of graphic designers wouldn’t do—which is why we quickly augmented the team with a set of animators who could deliver on that need with the same, rapid turnaround time

“We can really impact customer journeys as developers, strategists and content creators can work together in a fast and flexible manner.”

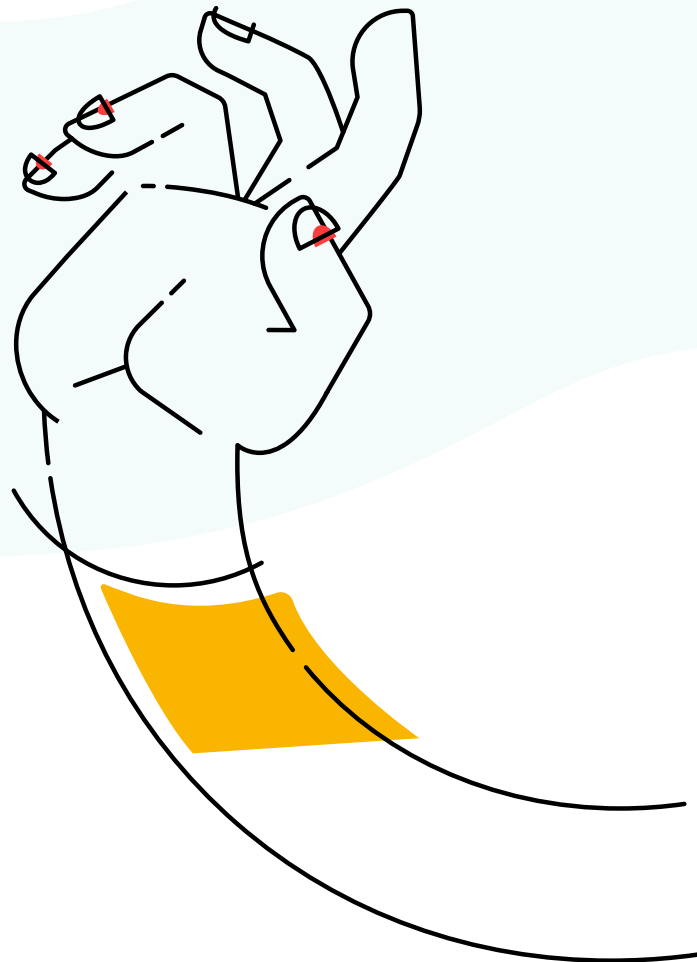
Whether the team is on-site or operating elsewhere, you might think of an integrated team as stripping away any barriers between your organization and the experts for whatever capabilities you need, whether it be emerging tech, artistic direction or something else.

expected. The brand achieved this without the trouble of sending out an RFP to bidders or fielding resumes from freelancers.

Integrated teams aren't the same as your typical production partnership, nor are they the same as simply outsourcing work to a body shop. In our integrated partnerships, we've seen how easy it is for teams to introduce new capabilities on top of projects after discovering some need—for example, providing copy options after noticing that in-house copy didn't exactly fit with the visual design.

"What's unique about this kind of partnership is that it's focused on the long-term," says Martens. "You see this in the optimization of workflows, but it's also a matter of deeper brand understanding, which allows us to proactively add to creative ideas." On the organization's side, it lets them tackle new and existing problems more flexibly.

"What's unique about this partnership is it's focused on the long-term, providing a deeper brand understanding."



KEEP IT FRESH WITH RELEVANT, TIMELY CONTENT TRIGGERS

Content triggers are the pillar of real-time marketing, ranging anywhere from planned and proactive content to reactive communication. While brands have typically kept to the planned, proactive approach (like brand events or planned campaigns), social media has driven them to build up their in-house capabilities to adopt a faster pace of production supported by brand knowledge.

“Brands are moving from short-term campaigns into programs and ecosystems that are built around always-on content,” says Martens. Because the team works partially in-house and is dedicated to the brand, organizations don’t have to jump through hoops to deliver on the ask.

“These Monks understand the brand experience in-depth and can thus represent its values, aesthetic and tone of voice in our wider teams.”

An approach that requires collaboration between several parties sometimes slows production down, which is why we try to take a leaner approach to everything we do, including project-oriented tasks. Integrated teams serve as one alternative designed to eliminate bottlenecks and allow for the rapid design of timely content triggers, which is critical for how organizations must engage with consumers today.

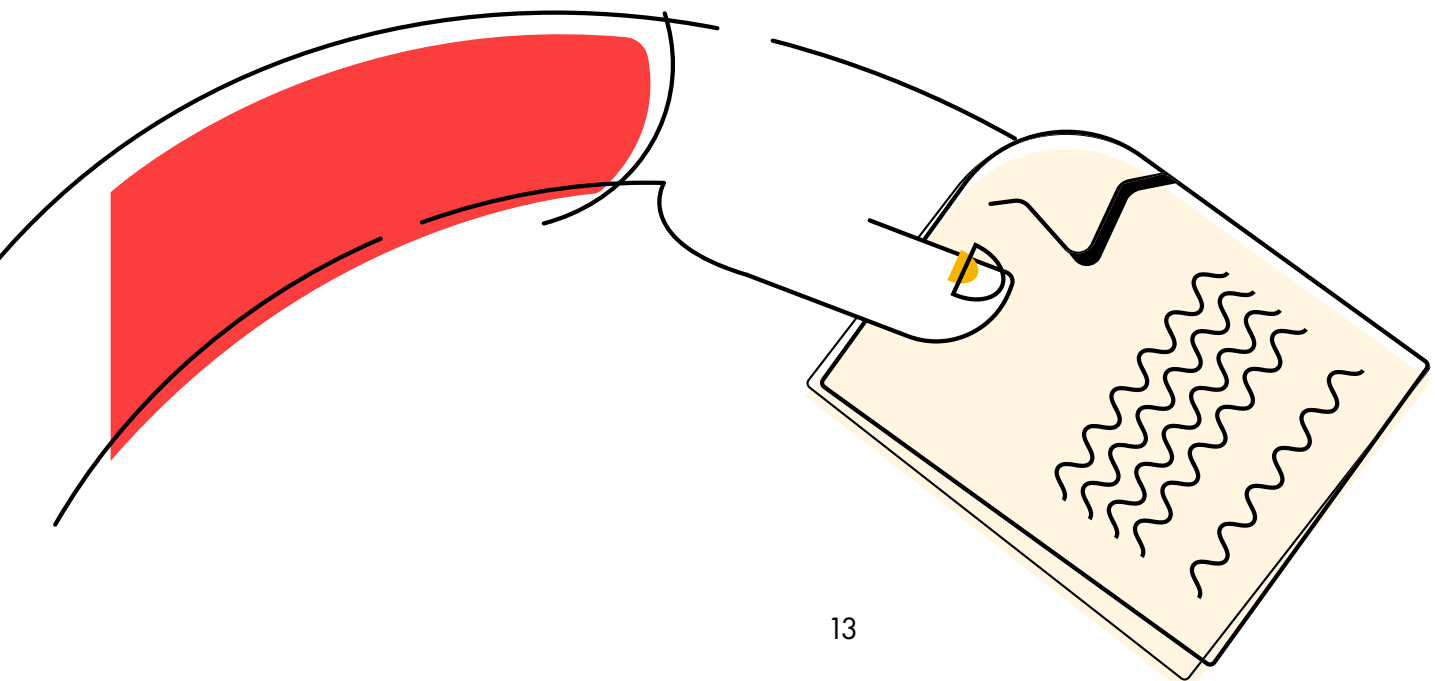
By implementing creative toolkits that allow for easy reuse of content at scale, the integrated team model optimizes workflows to deliver relevant content triggers at unprecedented speed.

This speed is thanks in part to an always-on, global talent studio. When necessary, integrated teams can tap into talent from other offices around the world, which means work continues to get done elsewhere after you’ve closed up shop for the day.

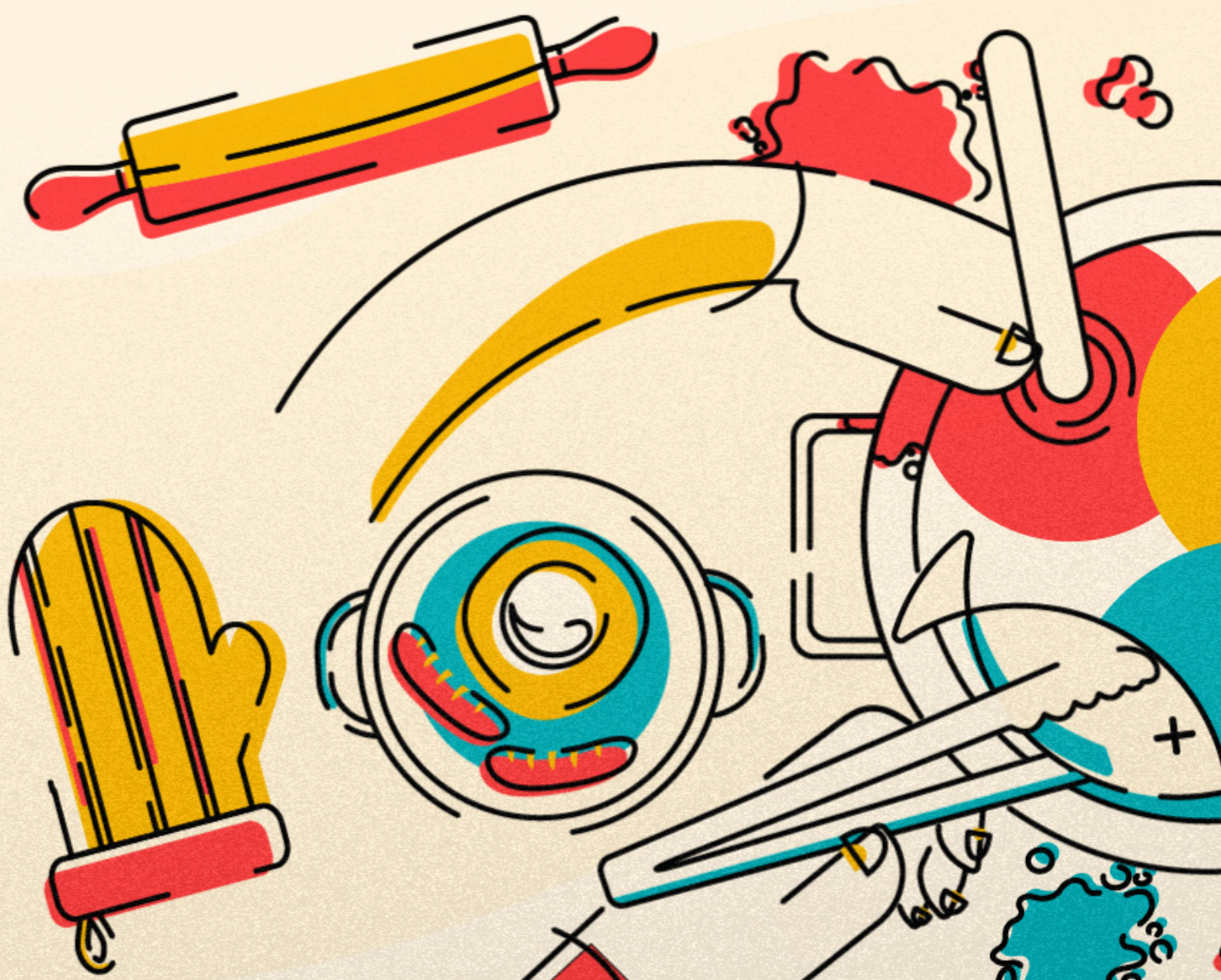
"This interaction between an internal MediaMonks brand ambassador and our global support network is a powerful mechanic," says Martens. "These Monks understand the brand experience in-depth and can thus represent its values, aesthetic and tone of voice in our wider teams." If a team gets a brief at end of day from the partner, they can deliver up to sixteen hours of work spread across time zones by the following morning, providing quality work within timelines that were once viewed as unrealistic. Say goodbye to feeling like there aren't enough hours in a day.

unique challenges facing the advertising industry today. Organizations no longer have to put their brands in the hands of an outside agency to deliver on the ever-increasing demand for relevant content. With dedicated, open access to a diverse pool of talent, they become better prepared to meet industry challenges while retaining complete ownership of their work. "Our experiences have shown us that MediaMonks is used as a lever for the brand to further build their own studio or spend more time on the work that matters most," says Martens. "Brands are taking back control."

The integrated team model is a reaction to the



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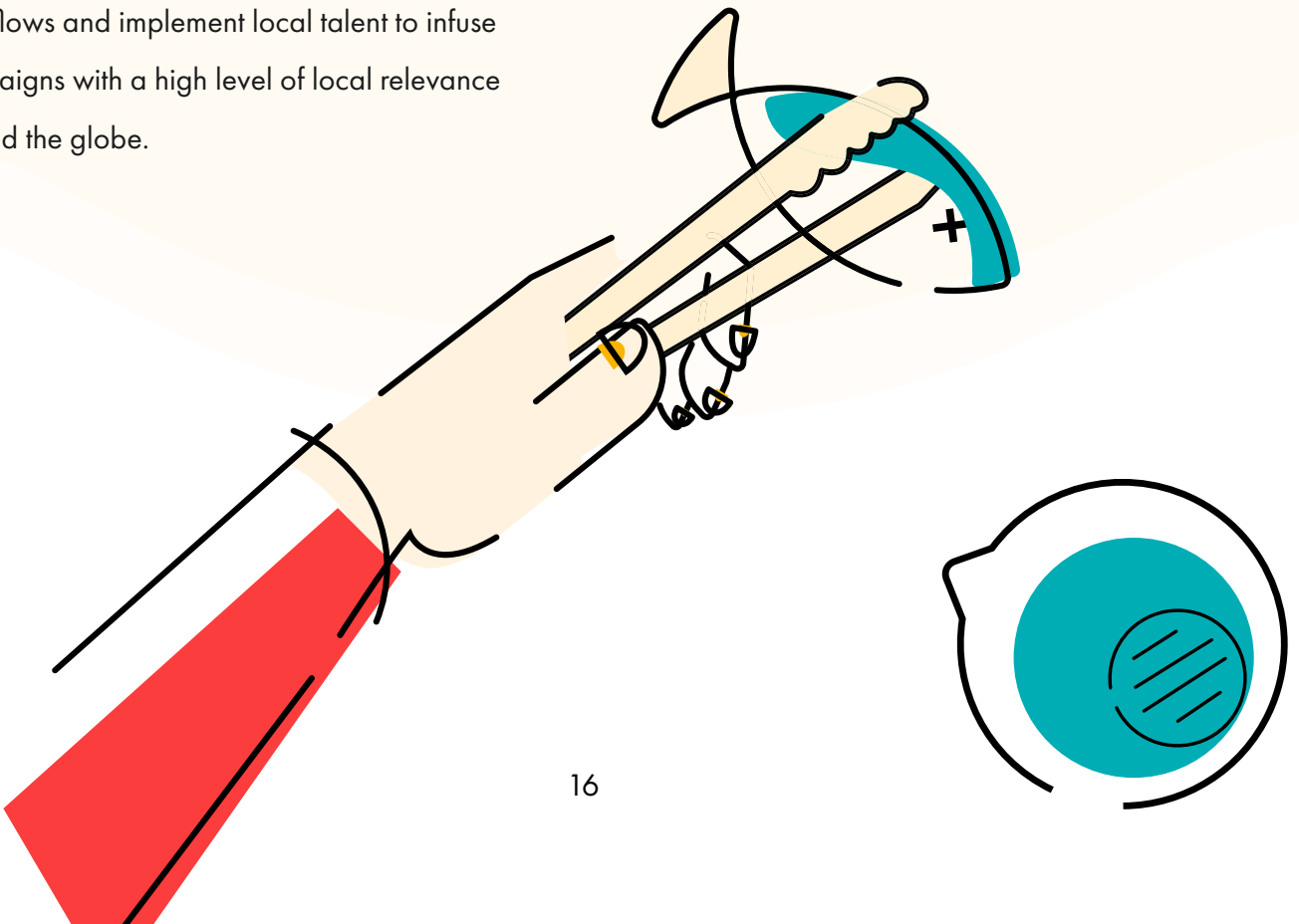
JUGGLING LOCAL RELEVANCY AND CONSISTENCY WITH AN INTEGRATED PRODUCTION PARTNER



Localization is a key challenge for any brand targeting several geographic markets, whether they be multinational or domestic. The way you'll talk to a New Yorker about pizza, after all, might resonate differently with an audience in Italy. This gets at the heart of what good localization really is: it's not just a matter of translation, but of paying special care to include the smaller details and nuances that appeal to a specific market.

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Pulling off this level of transcreation can be tough due to the sheer volume of assets needed per market, the knowledge required about what markets respond to, and complex processes that hamper brands' abilities to push this content out efficiently. For organizations struggling with any of these challenges, an integrated production partnership can help optimize transcreation workflows and implement local talent to infuse campaigns with a high level of local relevance around the globe.



STREAMLINE PRODUCTION FOR GROWTH

Inefficient transcreation isn't just a matter of audience relevance; it can impede growth as well. For example, one of our integrated partners is a digital brand that's experienced very rapid growth through the acquisition of local businesses. With every new acquisition and market came a new need for assets, burying their in-house studio with an ever-increasing workload. An integrated partnership enabled the brand to offload lower complexity tasks and speed up the production process to match the rate of growth.

For some brands, speed to produce is essential, especially those catering to several markets.

A major entertainment brand, for example, must react to current events across markets with agility while understanding how a given story's

relevance might differ among those markets.

Because integrated partnerships thrive on long-term relationships and provide organizations with teams that are dedicated to their brands, they can streamline the production process by enabling daily deliverables rather than use a project-oriented approach. When brands feel increased pressure to develop always-on content ecosystems targeting different markets and cultures, an integrated partnership with access to a global talent base is ideal for offering the right message at the right time.



IMPROVE CONSISTENCY ACROSS MARKETS WITH NEW CREATIVE FRAMEWORKS

Offloading tasks is simple enough, though the true potential of an integrated partnership is to optimize workflows across levels of the production process. A common challenge for large, global organizations is that they juggle several vendors per market, which can complicate the production process or threaten quality and consistency.

Custom-built and engrained within your organization's culture, integrated partnerships have deep knowledge of a brand and can therefore serve as a safeguard.

Let's consider another brand we've worked with as an example. Its US team controlled asset

Custom-built and engrained within your organization's culture, integrated partnerships have deep knowledge of a brand and can therefore serve as a safeguard.

Through the guidance or talent resources enabled by an integrated partnership, brands can provide their local vendors and teams with the autonomy to tailor their messaging to local markets without worrying about inconsistencies in style or messaging. While it might seem as though such a partnership is inviting yet another outside vendor into the process, this model is developed for the long term and a sense of shared responsibility.

production in other markets including Asia, which resulted in messaging that wasn't locally relevant. This prompted local markets to work with their own vendors to develop assets with more cultural relevance. While they succeeded in that effort, the new materials lacked consistency. As the adage says, "too many cooks spoil the broth," and in this case, throwing several voices and vendors in the mix resulted in an inconsistent brand experience.

Our solution was to find a way to provide local vendors freedom and autonomy to create while still allowing for a centralized work stream.

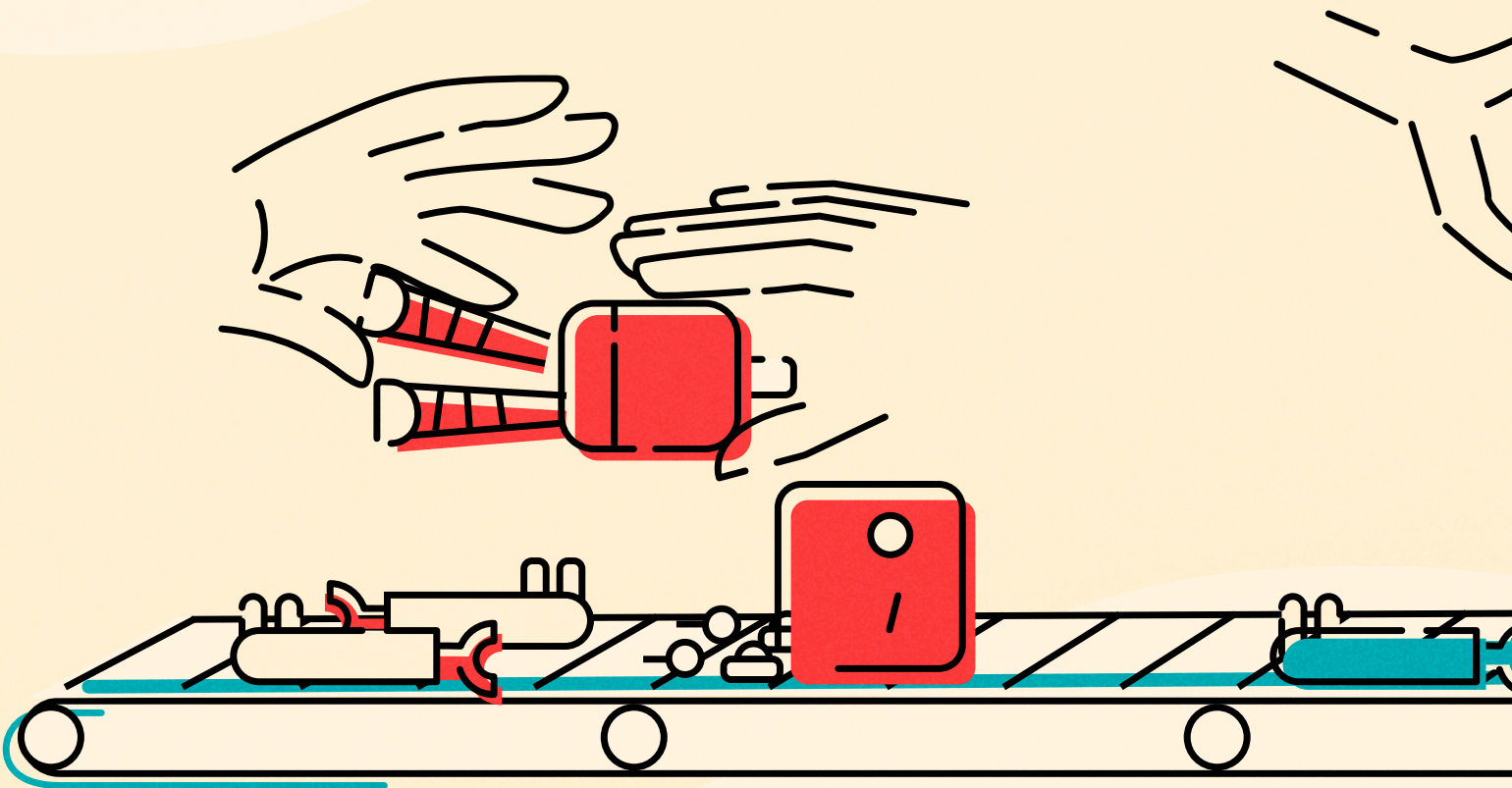
At MediaMonks, we're well-experienced in producing assets at scale through a unique creative framework that allows for several variations with little rework or added cost. We adapted this process for our partner by producing a series of master templates which would ensure a consistent visual style, while also being easy for local markets to adapt. This approach maintained flexibility while also quickening the time to market. "What sets this process apart is that transcreation is kept at front-of-mind and engrained into the process rather than being treated as an afterthought," says Martens.

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A TALENT STUDIO THAT KNOWS YOUR BRAND— AND YOUR LOCAL AUDIENCE

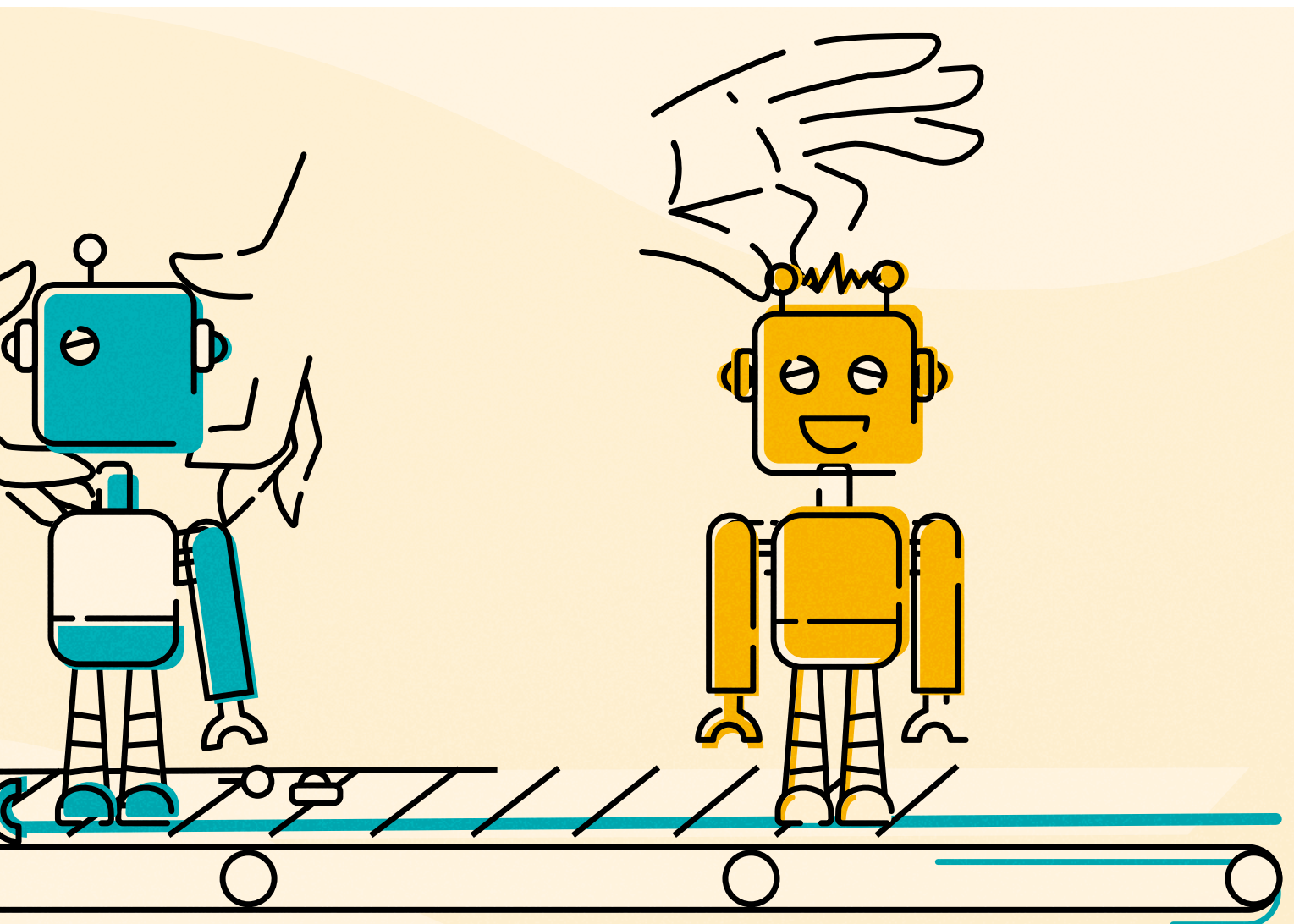
Finally, our integrated partnerships provide brands with access to an always-on, global talent studio that can easily place a brand in any market. When a brand sees an opportunity in a new market, we can tap into a local talent pool with an awareness of what resonates there.

“This flexibility in matching organizations to the larger MediaMonks network whenever needed is one of the key capabilities of integrated partnerships,” says Martens, “and is especially helpful for organizations that know no borders.”



Whether your organization is eyeing opportunities in new markets, is dealing with an unmanageable workload or simply needs to ensure a greater level of consistency across markets, an integrated partnership makes for a versatile, scalable model designed to fit those needs. Once in place, your team is equipped to adapt to new opportunities and challenges that can help your organization work faster and more efficiently, resulting in better ways to meet the needs of your audience no matter where they call home.

“Flexibility in matching organizations to whatever talent is needed is a key capability of this partnership, and is especially helpful for brands that know no borders.”



03



**CONNECT WITH A BRAND
AMBASSADOR ALIGNED
TO YOUR STRATEGIC,
LONG-TERM GOALS**



Today's marketing ecosystem relies on always-on content shared across many channels and tailored to individual user preferences. With new ways of delivering and consuming content comes a need for new ways of working and building partner relationships.

A Forrester report released in early 2019 explores the unique challenges that digital transformation poses to brands and CMOs in particular, who must ensure a better customer experience through the transformation process. But that experience is impacted by a number of factors across the digital landscape, prompting organizations to rethink how they do business at every level. This can manifest in

pivoting to new platforms, supporting new content channels or optimizing the production process for deliverables at scale.

Engaging in these challenges, brands are sure to highlight specific needs in their ongoing digital transformation. Once they've elevated this need—an optimized transcreation process, for example—brands require a new partnership model that can provide the needed expertise over the long term. According to the Forrester report mentioned above, "CMOs should challenge traditional agencies and insist on new pricing models — asking for a shared risk/revenue approach to test the willingness of their strategic partners to commit to results."

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- "CMOs: Define Your Role In Digital Transformation,"
Forrester Research, Inc., Feb 4 2019

STRATEGIZING WITH SHARED RISK AND GOALS

A key benefit of the integrated production partnership is that your custom-built team can reside in-house on a permanent or partial basis. The proximity that the brand ambassador has between an organization and the larger MediaMonks network allows for quicker, agile responses to the brand's needs, whether it be a need to scale up operations, offload some bandwidth or strategize new opportunities.

This is particularly useful for established or legacy brands seeking to adapt to something new—a need that's become all but required as brands seek to explore and adopt entirely new ways of thinking and working. This is especially important for brands embarking on a journey of digital transformation, as an integrated production partner can provide both creative and technical expertise to help organizations execute their goals while protecting their brand.

For example, one sector that's been dramatically altered by digital disruption is that of ecommerce, wholesale and retail. One of our partners is

heavily experienced in offline retail, but found an opportunity to step into the digital wholesale space. Because this was a new environment for our partner to play in, it was important that they had easy access to a UX strategy expert to whom they could consult for help in designing and implementing the digital purchasing experience.

This resulted in the team's Lead UX Designer serving as a key brand ambassador in the partnership, whose primary responsibilities are to lead workshops, sit down with product owners and draw up a roadmap with key stakeholders in the company. "These talks become much more regular and prominent throughout the development and execution process, as opposed to getting a brief and then building a solution," says Martens. What results is a close, long-term partnership focused on future-proofing and sustained success.

In researching how to implement the best UX for this partner's platform, we recommended conducting user interviews—something the partner was originally reticent about. But our brand ambassador was able to understand, relay and engage with those concerns to eventually make the case for the interviews' usefulness. "The insights gleaned from those interviews shifted the course of the project for the better," says Martens. "Thanks to the embedded model, the brand could quickly pivot to respond to new insights without taking the project off-track."

SAFEGUARDING BRANDS WITH DESIGN ACUMEN

We're well aware of how essential it is for brands to safeguard themselves, whether it be ensuring a consistent experience across markets and touchpoints, or placing work in hands they can trust to understand and execute the brand's voice. This concern is right at the heart of the integrated production partnership, which is dedicated to upholding and protecting design standards while lightening a brand's workload.

This is achieved by drawing on experience from the production floor to inform a partner's strategy. Traditional consultancies may focus primarily on business strategy and its technical implementations, but our brand ambassadors provide partners with an open door to the vast creative talent available in our network. With our own high visual standards,

we strive to be proactive in seeking new opportunities to showcase partners' brands with best-in-class design.

While preparing for its annual keynote presentation, for example, one partner sought out bold, flashy animations to ensure its points stuck. While this work was outside the scope of our typical, day-to-day deliverables with the partner, our flexible setup connected them with an animation team capable of bringing their design needs to life. Because the partner had a very specific look and feel in mind for the project, fluid communication between both parties—a process streamlined by the ambassador at the center, who has a clear understanding of their brand's design philosophy—ensured it could be done quickly and to standard.



A LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP DESIGNED FOR SUCCESS

One reason why a brand ambassador can facilitate these projects so easily is because they work so closely with the brand, often partially in-house.

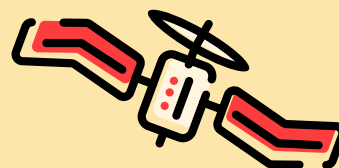
This proximity provides complete transparency on both sides of the aisle, and helps the brand ambassador gauge what bandwidth is available for finishing projects or optimizing the workflow.

The integrated production partnership model means that both parties have skin in the game and have a shared desire for success across the board. For the partner whose ecommerce platform is discussed above, we found an opportunity to optimize its B2B platforms as well. This process began with optimizing the existing UI and creating a new design system informed by continuous user testing. From there, we're looking forward to implementing new features into the platform to improve customer experience worldwide.

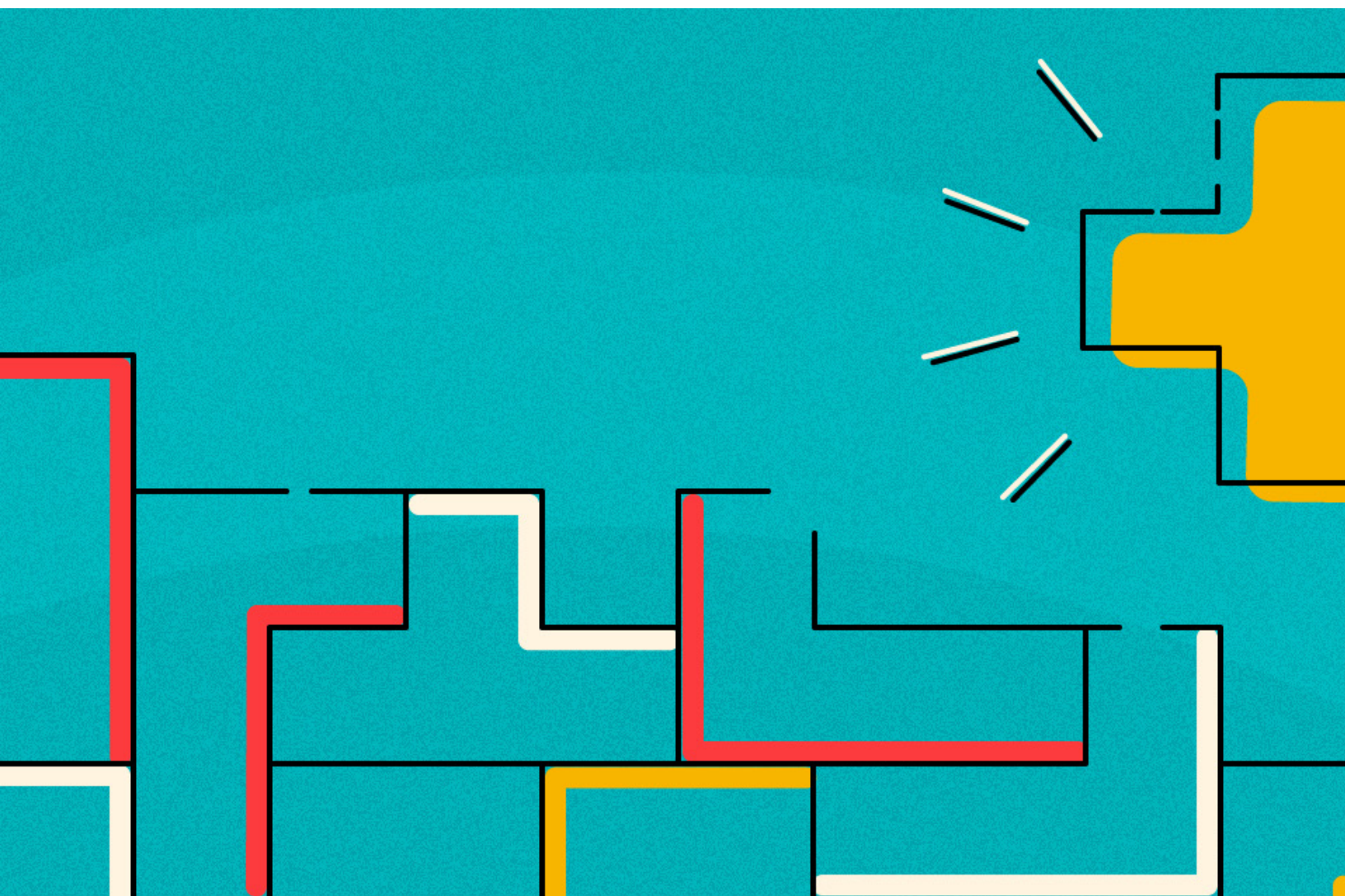
This goal for a more holistic brand experience drives home what makes this nature of partnership so unique: it might be designed to specifically tackle one goal, but over time capabilities can evolve with a brand's needs, with the brand ambassador available at arm's length to kick off

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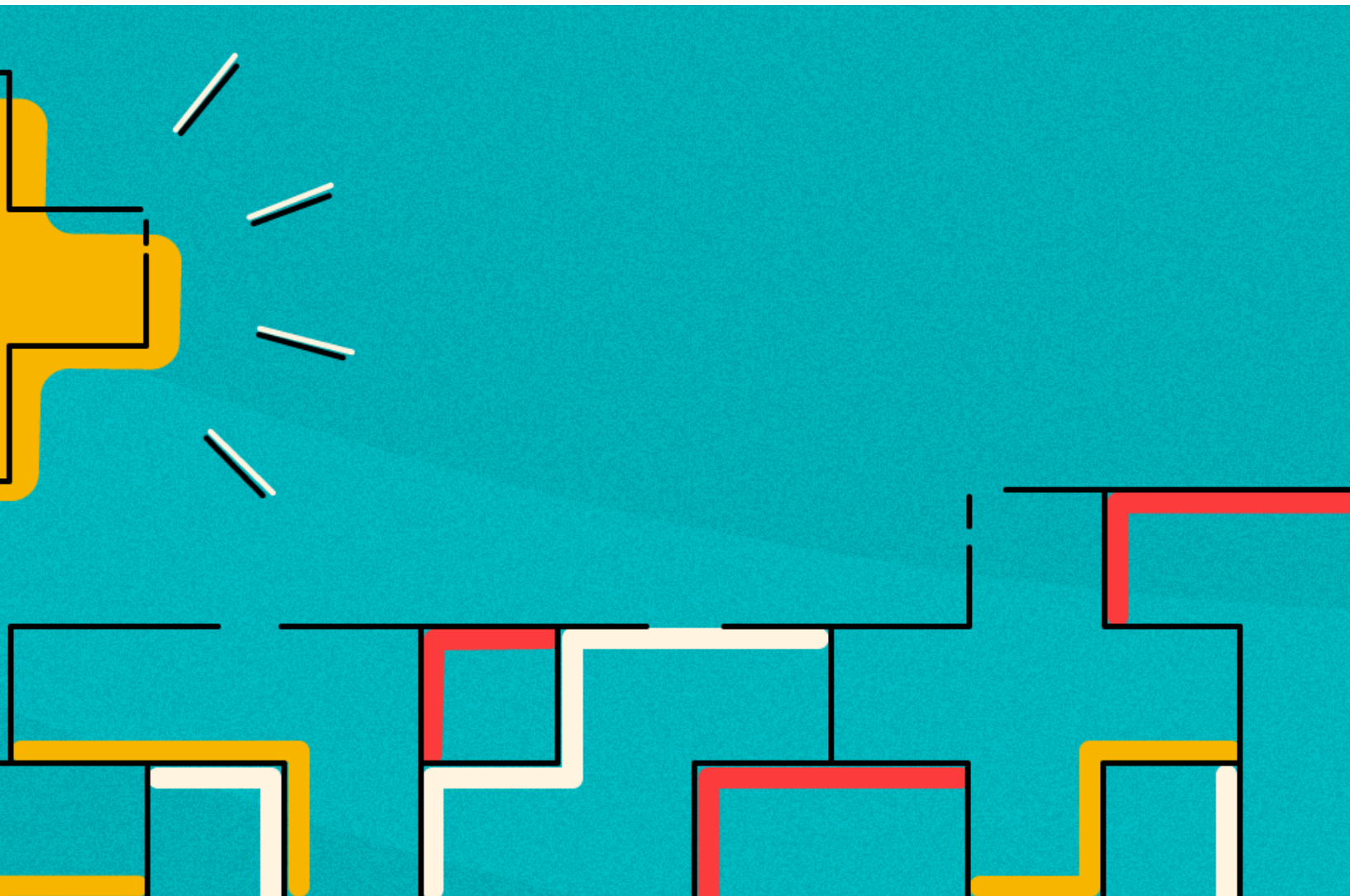
talks and help source talent. From there, organizations are better equipped to adapt to any need that crops up in the fast-changing digital landscape they seek to carve a path through.



04



BUILDING A COMMITTED, YET FLEXIBLE, LONG-TERM PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIP



To acclimatize to the fast-changing digital environment, many brands seek to think and work more like startups. No, brands aren't rushing to install foosball tables in their conference rooms (though that does sound like fun); rather, they see a need to open themselves up to more agile, flexible ways of working to continually adapt to new needs and trends. An integrated production partnership—unique in providing a team dedicated to a brand, but which also provides access to the larger

production toolset—delivers a great environment for brands to map out their transformation and reduce production pain points.

Brands have been flocking to in-house models in order to save on budget, achieve a faster time to market and to ensure their brands are faithfully represented by those who know them best. In a time when always-on content is required for maintaining relevancy and a direct connection to consumers,



these needs are incredibly common. But finding the right model for taking capabilities in-house (or partially in-house) is essential for success, as we've seen with brands whose priorities have shifted after establishing their own studios, requiring them to reorient yet again.



THE START OF AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

For brands that don't have the resources to go in-house, or simply need help in reducing their in-house studio's workload, an integrated partnership makes for a great alternative.

We know that organizational needs are prone to change, and are often hard to pinpoint for that matter. That's why integrated production partnerships provide the stability of working in-house, while offering the flexibility of an agency and production partnership that accommodates rapid growth or sudden needs. Because our teams share goals with our partners and are in for the long haul, we help brands optimize efficiencies and extract more value for less time and budget, lowering cost per asset.

One key example of this is the always-on content studio, which provides partners with access to our global talent network when required. "What we're seeing now in the market is that a lot of procurement teams are looking to consolidate vendors on a repetitive basis, not reinvent the wheel with frequent RFP's," says Martens. "The idea of having a content studio is gaining traction." For brands that don't have the resources to go in-house, or simply need help in reducing their in-house studio's workload, an integrated partnership makes for a great alternative.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT IS KEY

“We run a few models and none of them are the same.”

A couple years ago, there was a big push for a “pivot to video”: a trend in which publishers cut their writing teams and switched their focus to short-form, social video content that seemed like a better investment at the time. Such sudden changes in strategy are common these days, but they can also be incredibly disruptive when brands aren’t equipped to adapt at a moment’s notice—and they can also be unwise for those who are simply following a trend rather than making a fully thought out, strategic decision, as we saw when the pivot to video blew up in some organizations’ faces.

This is where integrated production partnerships really shine: while they’re designed to achieve a specific business goal, they’re easy to ladder up on all levels of the production process, whether that be merely offloading a brand’s in-house

workload, consolidating workstreams or costs, or providing a more active role in a brand’s strategy—for example, how to best support a new digital platform for the long term.

“We run a few models and none of them are the same,” says Martens, “and that’s because no two brands are the same.” Despite this, the process in establishing such teams always starts at the same place: with a discovery phase that prompts partners to look toward the long-term, at least six months down the line. “A lot of brands might not know what they’ll be up to six months from now,” says Martens, particularly because the landscape is always changing. By helping brands identify goals with the highest business impact, we can accelerate their evolution and easily scale up from there.

START SMALL, BUT THINK BIG

“Instead of fixing everything at once, we start with one workflow and move up from there.”

While integrated production teams primarily zero in on doing specific things really well—creating easily transformable assets at scale, for example—they’re by no means limited to a single task. Integrated into the larger MediaMonks network, these teams can quickly and easily connect brands with new, added capabilities as they arise. This helps brands achieve ongoing optimization across the production process and incrementally attain a higher digital maturity through a smoother transition.



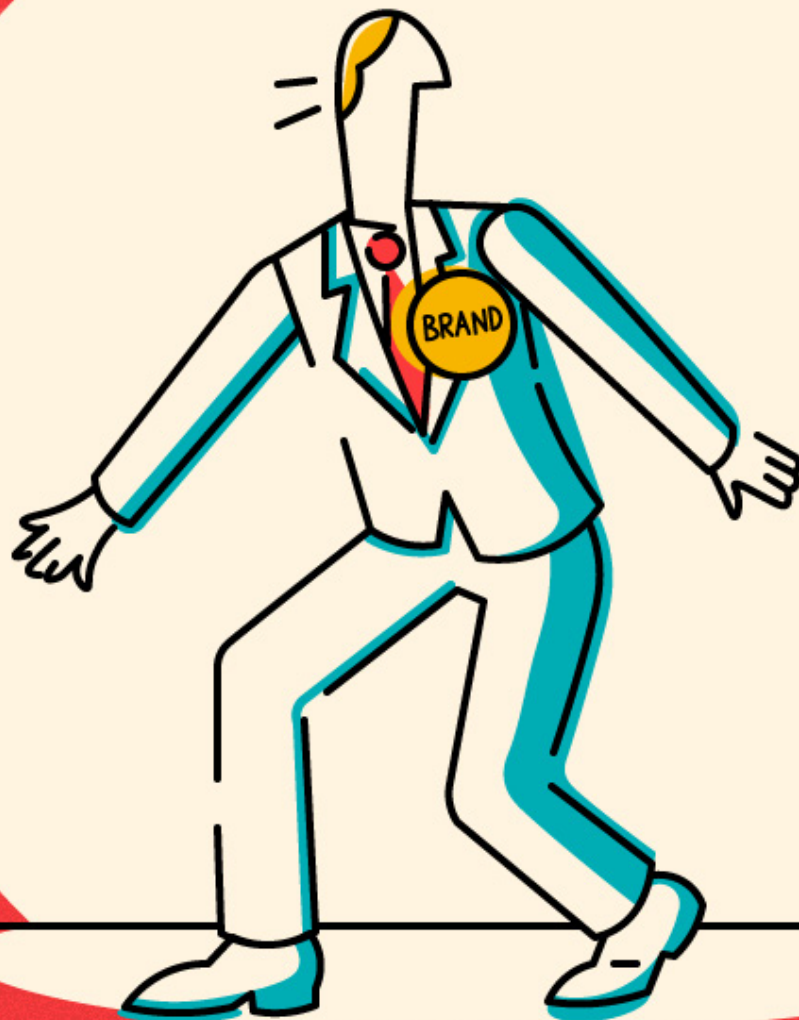
Think about it: digital transformation is an overwhelming endeavor. But starting with clear objectives and working your way out from there makes the progression more palatable and easier to process. “The problem is when you try to fix everything at once,” says Martens. “Instead, we start with one workstream and move up from there to, say, eight workstreams.”

Because platforms, technologies and user behaviors are always in a state of change,

the work is never done in making processes more efficient. This reality makes it essential for brands to optimize and make themselves more agile and flexible to react to—or lead with—new trends and deeper, more frequent user experiences. Integrated production partnerships exist to provide the level of sustained, long-term support that organizations may require to meet these long-term ambitions.



05



PLAN FOR SUCCESS WITH AN INTEGRATED PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIP

As we've explored in previous pages, brands seek ways to deliver content faster, at-scale and at a lesser cost—all without diminishing quality. Pulling off each of these might sound impossible, though the integrated production partnership model is ideal for meeting these needs by providing organizations the support and resources they need. Still, brands will have to take some initial steps to ensure success when working in these partnerships.

An integrated production partnership provides brands with a core team custom-built to their unique challenges and goals, whether it be producing content, optimizing workstreams, easing workloads or platform support. Designed for the long term, integrated production partnerships start small but can easily scale up and flex out to meet new challenges and opportunities (for example, localizing in a new market). But despite the convenience of an integrated team, no major change is without growing pains. If you're considering investing in an integrated production partnership for your brand, take some time to mull over these considerations for success first.

BE OPEN TO CHANGE

Because integrated production partnerships are built from the ground up to support brands' unique needs, each one begins with a discovery phase that identifies key challenges and their solutions. This process raises questions that can range from fairly basic to quite specific, prompting brands to lay it all out and take a long, hard look at the way they operate.

One major step within this phase includes a data boot camp. Throughout this data audit, we work with the brand to understand what data is available and how it can be used more efficiently across levels of the organization. "Instead of letting data go into a black hole, we can choose a handful of the most necessary data points to focus on," says Martens. Unlocking data potential often involves revising workstreams across an organization—for example, breaking down departmental silos—which requires a brand and its stakeholders to be

"Instead of letting data go into a black hole, we can choose a handful of the most necessary data points to focus on."

open and honest about the challenges they face. But nothing is off-limits, and any challenge raised should be viewed as an opportunity.

LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE

Once we've discovered the most relevant or needed key data points available, we can put them to action by cementing key KPIs that result in success. This takes us to the next major step in discovery: developing a forecast calendar. It can be difficult for brands to extend their view six months to a year into the future, especially when business decisions or priorities can change at a moment's notice.

The process also helps us learn whether the nature of the work is more ad-hoc or rigid in scope. This is where the benefits to an integrated production partnership become clearer to brands: it allows your organization to become more agile and adaptive for when the going gets tough. Forecasting can help map out possible opportunities or capabilities that might become needed in the near or distant future.

While it once was easier for brands to forecast far ahead, that distance is rapidly shrinking, which can be scary for an organization to process.

Ter Haar asks this all the time: "Will we be relevant in X?" That X could be years, months, or even weeks in the future. While it once was easier for brands to forecast far ahead, that distance is rapidly shrinking, which can be scary for an organization to process. "Because some brands face challenges that far into the future, they may have a fear of locking in a group of people for long-term tasks," says Martens, "so we keep our core team lean. Flexible and able to tap into the larger MediaMonks talent pool when needed, this new model alleviates any retainer fear that brands might have."

"We don't do this to nickel and dime our services, but to establish a plan that tackles a key issue with the opportunity to scale out organically," says Martens. While this might sound like typical program management, what makes our partnership unique is the closeness of both parties involved. "Any efficiency we enable benefits us just as directly as our partners," says Martens. "We want them to be better at their jobs."

LEARN TO LOVE AUTOMATION

You can't push for greater efficiency within your organization without talking about automation, but teams often bristle at the thought of it. And it's easy to understand why: for creatives, automation can often feel limiting. "Marrying the systematic approach with creative freedom is a general challenge and a natural point of friction," says Martens. But automating rote tasks and processes can allow for more cost-effective creative without sacrificing quality.

This allows creative teams to devote more time to complex, rewarding creative tasks rather than repetitive ones.

As discussed above, an embedded services team can help you define the data most essential for optimizing your output. But how effective that strategy will be boils down to whether your team is prepared to embrace new creative frameworks using automation. For what it's

***"CMOs will be able to let their teams refocus their energy on core marketing activities such as brand strategy, creative thinking, new product innovation, and business models."*⁵**

*"Artificial Intelligence Will Spark A Real Marketing Renaissance,"
Forrester Research, Inc., Aug 3 2018*

Partners who seriously want to increase their efficiency should view automation as a creative advantage, not hindrance. With automation, says a Forrester report detailing the AI marketing renaissance, "CMOs will be able to let their teams refocus their energy on core marketing activities such as brand strategy, creative thinking, new product innovation, and business models."⁵

worth, pushing the limits of machine learning to make creatives' lives easier is a key motivation for our experimental creative technologists at MediaMonks.

INCLUDE STAKEHOLDERS FROM ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

Forming an integrated production partnership means altering the way your organization works, and therefore requires input from people across departments and levels of the business. “The more colorful the room is, the more points of view you have for building the operation in a tailor-made way,” says Martens. A diverse range of viewpoints also makes it easier to pinpoint problems and KPIs for the core team to tackle.

“A typical agency might say ‘It’s my way or the highway,’” says Martens, “though our view is that the plan is only relevant when built for the brand.” Gauging pain points among several stakeholders from across the organization allows us to work with brands to prioritize the most pressing needs for efficiency.

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Often, this places your brand ambassador into the role of mediator, ensuring that all sides of the equation are kept happy or being heard. A great example of this is the point raised above about automation: procurement might love the cost-saving benefits of the initiative, while creatives may push back. But by distilling everyone’s concerns to arrive at a solution, brands can end up with a creative framework that allows for cost-effective, insights-driven content that engages consumers at scale on an individual level—a win for everyone.

Whether your brand struggles to support a continual stream of content or needs long-term platform support, an integrated production partnership helps to zero in on goals, discover opportunities for efficiency and plug in any talent gaps your team might face. After considering the points discussed above, you’re ready to begin envisioning how such a partnership can enhance your organization.

BEGIN FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR ORGANIZATION NOW

By now, you've learned the ins and outs of integrated production partnerships and how they work. You also have a taste for what to expect early in the relationship, including the need to gather cross-organizational stakeholders to define challenges and success. While organizational

There's a lot of unease in the current marketing environment: roles are changing, new technology is emerging, and workflows become more complex as organizations grow. To make matters more complicated, these changes force brands to adapt at an ever-quicken pace. It's important that

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change is sometimes uncomfortable, an integrated production partnership supports brands with the expertise and guidance needed to build efficiency and adapt to changing needs.

Built to ease specific burdens and challenges that partners face in their day-to-day workstreams, our brand-dedicated teams open organizations up to more flexible, agile ways of working. Close access to the global MediaMonks talent studio ensures that partners always have access to the services, talent and resources they need most—often on short notice.

brands seek new capabilities for scaling up and accommodating growth—and that creative and production companies open up avenues for them to achieve those needs with ease and speed.

Our integrated production partnership model aims to do just that.

If you'd like to discuss production partnership opportunities or learn how a dedicated, embedded team can achieve your organization's needs, [simply reach out and we'll be in touch.](#)



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ABOUT MEDIAMONKS

MediaMonks is a global creative and production company. We partner with clients across industries and markets to craft amazing work for leading businesses and brands. Our integrated production capabilities span the entire creative spectrum, covering anything you could possibly want from a production partner, and probably more.

From creative campaigns and content to bespoke development and design, MediaMonks works above the line and below the fold at the intersection of creativity and technology. We operate across teams, time zones and technologies with an incredible in-house team of 1000+ Monks. Our work is recognized by advertising and craft awards around the world, producing 128 Cannes Lions and 220+ FWAs to date.

Founded in 2001 and rooted in digital, you can find us anywhere on the web as well as in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, London, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Dubai, Singapore and Shanghai.

In July 2018, MediaMonks joined forces with S4Capital to build out the production platform of the future. Under the direction of Sir Martin Sorrell, we're increasing our firepower on all fronts, adding new Monks, monasteries and services such as data analytics and digital media buying.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Wesley ter Haar is the Founding Monk of MediaMonks. He co-founded the company in 2001 to wage war on mediocre digital production, working tirelessly to grow MediaMonks into a creative production powerhouse with global reach and recognition. MediaMonks employs 1000+ Monks spread across 12 offices around the world. Primarily working from MediaMonks' LA and Mexico City offices, Wesley acts as MediaMonks' COO, making him a self-described "lifeline for deadlines" and "Project Manager of Project Managers." Wesley also sits on the boards of SoDA and S4 Capital, alongside Sir Martin Sorrell. He's a sought-after speaker and jury member, most notably serving as the inaugural president of Cannes Lions' Digital Craft jury in 2016. He was inducted into the ADCN Hall of Fame in 2018.

Louise Martens heads key creative partnerships at MediaMonks and coordinates a cross-continental teams of markers. A seasoned digital production trooper with an eye for design, love for spreadsheets and knack for international operations, Louise works directly with top brands across the world to increase efficiency, safe-guard effectiveness and drive down costs.

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QUESTIONS THAT KEEP CMO'S UP AT NIGHT

When designing integrated production partnerships, we've heard it all.

From drowning under unsustainable production demands to difficulty looking long-term amidst a shifting tech landscape, we know the biggest universal challenges that brands face today.

Do any of these questions feel familiar?

1. How do I keep up with the increasing demand for more content with a declining budget?

2. How do I ensure my team knows my brand well when it's so hard to retain talent?

**3. Do my partners really have my best interests in mind?
How do I keep us all aligned?**

4. How will my organization adapt to new needs when keeping up with our regular production demand is such a challenge?

5. How will our organization remain relevant when forecasting into the future is so tough?

If this resonates, [drop us a line](#) to start exploring how an integrated production partnership can work for you.

**MEDIA
MONKS**