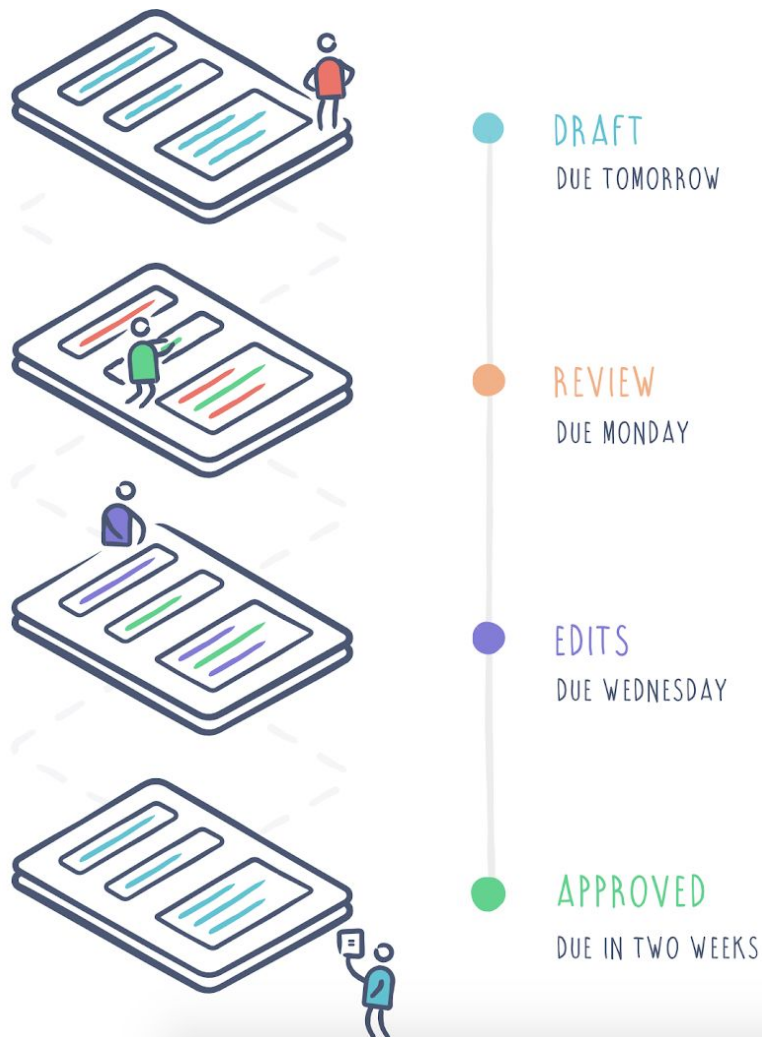


How to design a content delivery workflow with your team



A workflow brings order to processes, connecting all those involved in content production to ensure content is delivered on time. Workflow is a key element of Content operations ([ContentOps](#)) because it can connect silos, give structure, keep content moving and offer a repeatable, adaptable, and scalable way to get content done.

The earlier you can design your own process, the better. The more time you invest upfront in your content, the fewer obstacles and challenges you will face after you kick-off production and move towards delivery. A clear and agreed workflow should be in place as a standard part of operations for all content initiatives.

Running a workshop is a great way to design your process whilst engaging key stakeholders. The workshop will need a facilitator, if you're reading this, it may well be you. Follow our handy steps here to co-design your content delivery workflow for an upcoming redesign, content initiative, campaign, or just for how you'll deliver content on an on-going basis.

Workshop goals

1. Design an appropriate workflow for the project (it certainly won't be perfect).
2. Identify content delivery gaps and red flags early.
3. Inform content governance.

Prepare the workshop

- Book a meeting room for 2 hours.
- Invite stakeholders: Senior Editor, Writers, CMS Editor, Subject Matter Experts, Content Strategists and Designers, UX/Design etc.
- Bring plenty of post-its, pens, some big sheets of paper, and a stack of biscuits.

Workshop activities

Introduce the workshop participants:

- Split the room into two teams with a mix of roles in each team.
- Handout/share a generic workflow diagram (like the one at the end of this guide) to give them a mental model of what such a process looks like.
- Give them a specific example of a content item (like a blog article or staff profile) relevant to the organisation that needs to go through the workflow (they are about to design).
- Share print outs of that content and/or the latest sketches and prototypes of that content type.

Task 1: Map your content workflow

Allow 20 - 30 minutes

Ask both teams to capture the appropriate workflow steps for producing the example content item you've decided to focus on.

Ask them to use a post-it note for each stage (to move them around).

Task 2: Add people

Allow 10 minutes

Assign and label a person or role to each stage in their workflow.

Look out for:

- Are all the assigned roles already filled?
- Is the same person or role appearing time and again?
- Are the named people aware of the content requirements and their responsibilities on it?

Tip: Use colour-coded stick-men or post-its to quickly visualise recurring roles.

Task 3: Identify risks and pain points

Allow 10 minutes

Highlight and annotate potential pain-points in your workflow.

- Consider bottlenecks, known issues, lack of skills, internal politics.
- Give the teams red dots for visual impact.

Ask these questions:

- Are there lots of people with a say in the content?
 - Is an unfair workload falling on one person?
 - Do we have the required skills? Where might things get political and contentious?
-

Task 4: Design solutions

Allow 15 minutes

Develop ideas that could help to mitigate or smooth out the potential pain points.

- Consider the use of software, systems, and tools
 - What are the current techniques and coping strategies for producing content?
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Task 5: Estimate time

Allow 10 minutes

Estimate in fractions of hours how much effort each stage may realistically take and total them.

Attempt to estimate how much Effort (as fractions of hours) each stage could realistically take to perform – write the agreed number against each stage.

Remember to be realistic and go with previous experience. Better to be conservative until proven otherwise.

Calculate the actual man-hours of work (Effort) required to complete the stage rather than the span of time (the Duration) it takes for the stage to be completed, although both are important when planning resourcing.

- Total up all the stages at the end of the process
 - Multiply the total with the anticipated pages on the new site to get an estimate of total effort for all your content
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Task 6: Pitch and critique the workflows

Allow 10 minutes per team

Present your workflow for the rest of the team to critique.

Each group walks the whole room through their workflow and invites discussion.

Video the presentations to watch back later, take lots of high-res pics of the outputs and back up ASAP.

After the workshop

Digitise the draft workflow plans from the workshop and refine them into version 1.0 and share back with the team for feedback.

This can be a simple Powerpoint, Google Doc, or diagram that you can easily iterate with the team's feedback and the inevitable insights you will get once you actually start to move content items through the workflow.

You may need to do some more thinking at this point about how you are going to address the gaps and pain points that emerged from the tasks. For example: make a recommendation that you need to hire a dedicated Copywriter for some of the project, or to recommend that the CEO does not get to review every item of content in the workflow.

This can be a good time to circulate and present to Senior Managers to get their buy-in. It will help to set their expectations about:

- Who is involved in delivering content
- How much effort it will take per content item
- Where the pain points are expected to be (and your solutions)

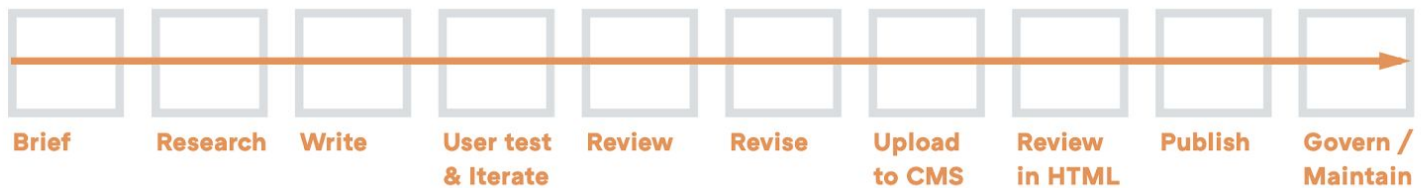
You can also use the diagram to communicate to Subject Matter Experts where they fit into the process.

Remember to make sure the latest workflow diagram and supporting docs are easily available to the team and stakeholders. Hosting your workflow in a central place ([like GatherContent!](#)) makes it accessible to the entire team so there is no mis-understanding as to who is responsible for what.

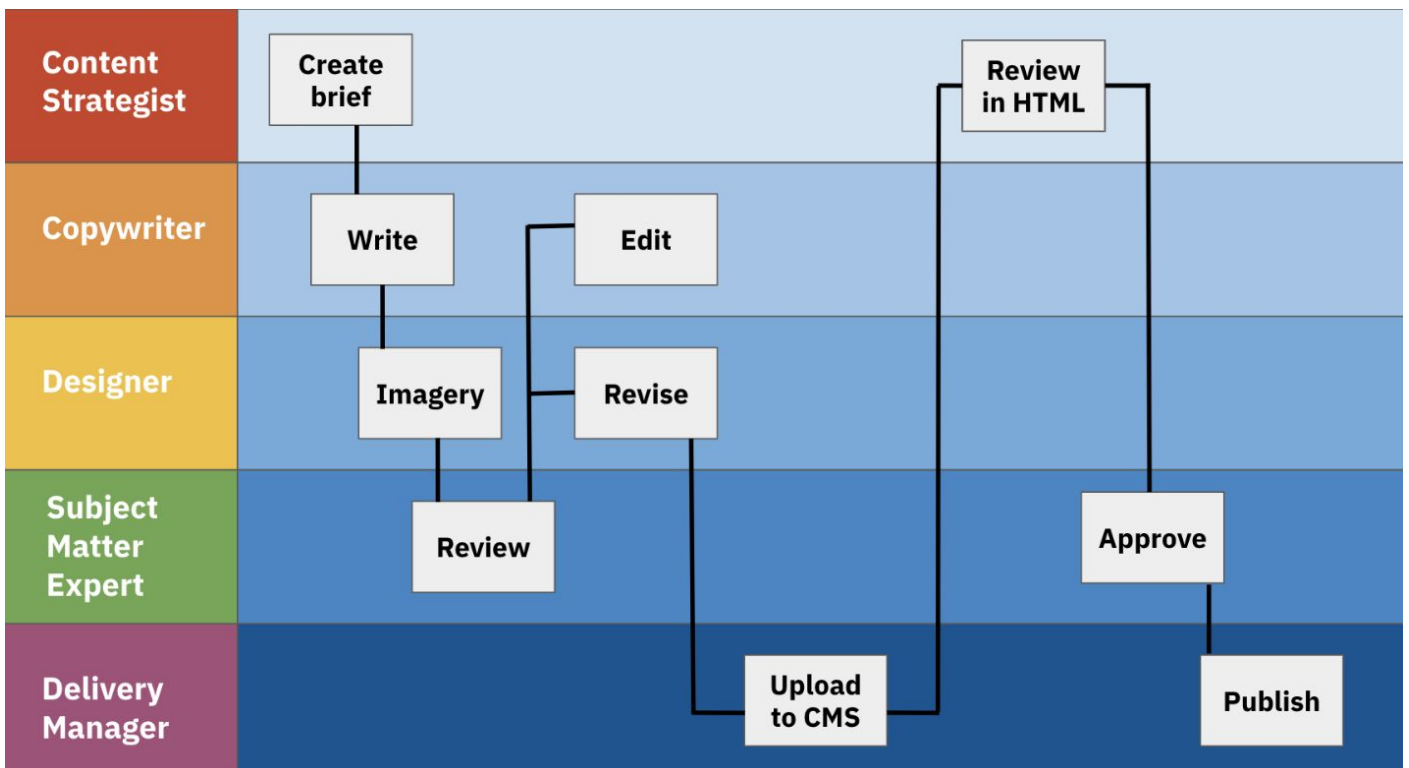
Workflow inspiration

Visualising your workflow can be an effective way to share this with those involved and brings to life the process you will have designed in the workshop. Here are some examples for inspiration.

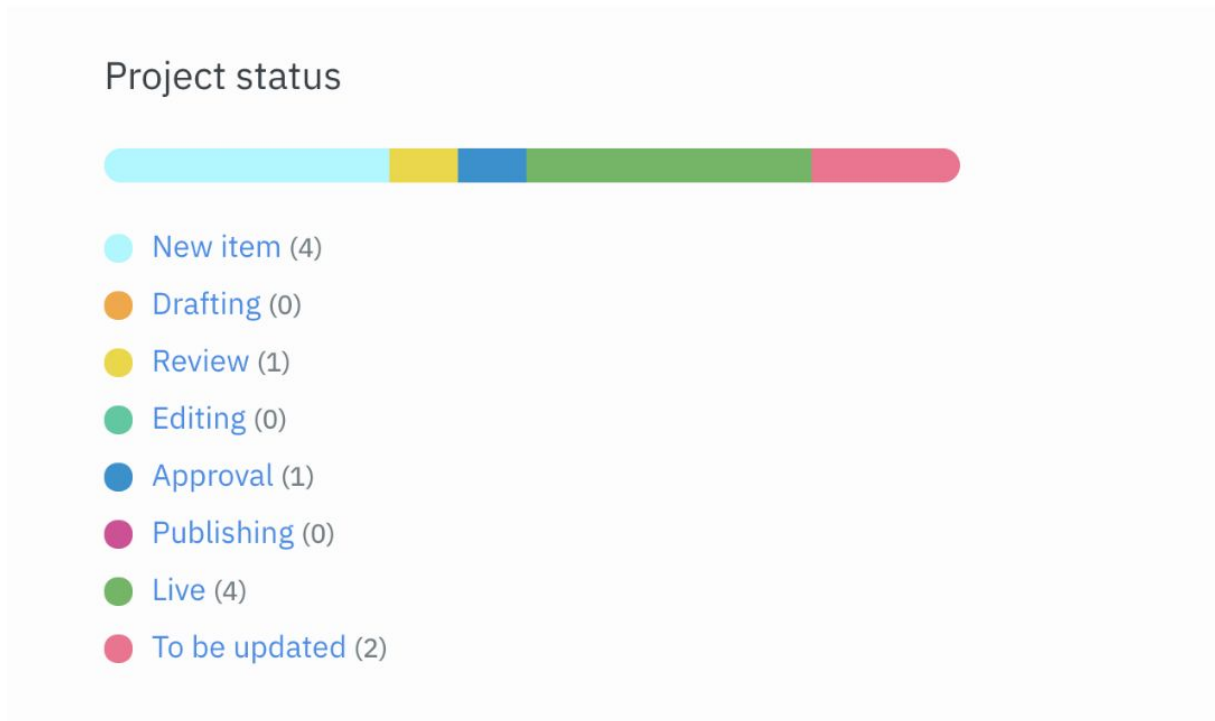
A typical workflow diagram might be linear and show each stage in order:



A swimlane visualisation of a workflow shows the people/teams involved and content moves between them:



Workflow in GatherContent is linear like our first example and when you use this platform to manage your ContentOps you always have visibility on content status.



Organise a time to learn how GatherContent supports content workflow

[Learn more about the platform](#)