2022 | Q4

CREATIVE OPERATIONS REPORT

In-House Creative Teams
Are Leveraging Metrics
to Make an Impact

Lytho™

Executive Summary

Over 2022, we set out to see how in-house creative teams were evolving and restructuring. In our Q2 report we revealed that teams were facing key challenges such as tight timelines, unclear or incomplete requests, and trouble keeping up with the volume of work. In Q3, we found that 3 out of 4 teams were restructuring. Efficiency was the main driver, with 37% of teams reporting that their ability to deliver work more rapidly was the top outcome.

If teams are restructuring to drive success, we had to ask: what metrics do those teams use to measure success? And how do teams use that data in decision-making? Our Q4 research is designed to explore those questions. Next to that, we also wanted to measure the organizational impact of creative and marketing teams tracking metrics and using them to make data-driven decisions.

After surveying over 120 creative and marketing professionals, an overwhelming 95% of the in-house creative teams report that they are tracking metrics. However, 83% of respondents indicated that they started tracking metrics in the past year, with 63% only starting in the last six months. So, what has been the catalyst for teams that has led them to start tracking metrics now?

Teams want to show their work's impact in a data-driven and tangible manner so that, as the pace of business increases and structural changes like remote work alter

95%
In-house creative teams are tracking metrics

83%
Started tracking metrics within the last 12 months

the landscape, they can prove their value and impact in a way that might have been taken for granted just a few years ago. They are leveraging metrics to identify where process bottlenecks are and make improvements (76%). Not only that but they are using the data to build business cases for additional resources whether it is through external agencies (72%) or adding headcount (67%).

Respondents have been overwhelmingly satisfied with the metrics their teams are tracking. More importantly, they believe that the team is using the data to make business decisions. However, 43% of teams admitted that pulling metrics is still a cumbersome task, since they must gather information from multiple tools and that doing so is often quite a manual process.

Throughout the Q4 report, we dig in on the top metrics being tracked - both leading and lagging indicators. We also lean on the experts to share their stories and words of wisdom about how they are leveraging metrics to make an impact in their organization.

76%
**Teams are leveraging metrics to identify bottlenecks and make improvements**
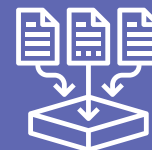
43%
Teams admitted that pulling metrics is a cumbersome task

Teams with Metrics Tracking

Tracking of Impact/Output Metrics

The vast majority **(95%) of respondents** are part of an **in-house creative team** that **tracks specific metrics** regarding impact and/or output of creative and marketing efforts

5%
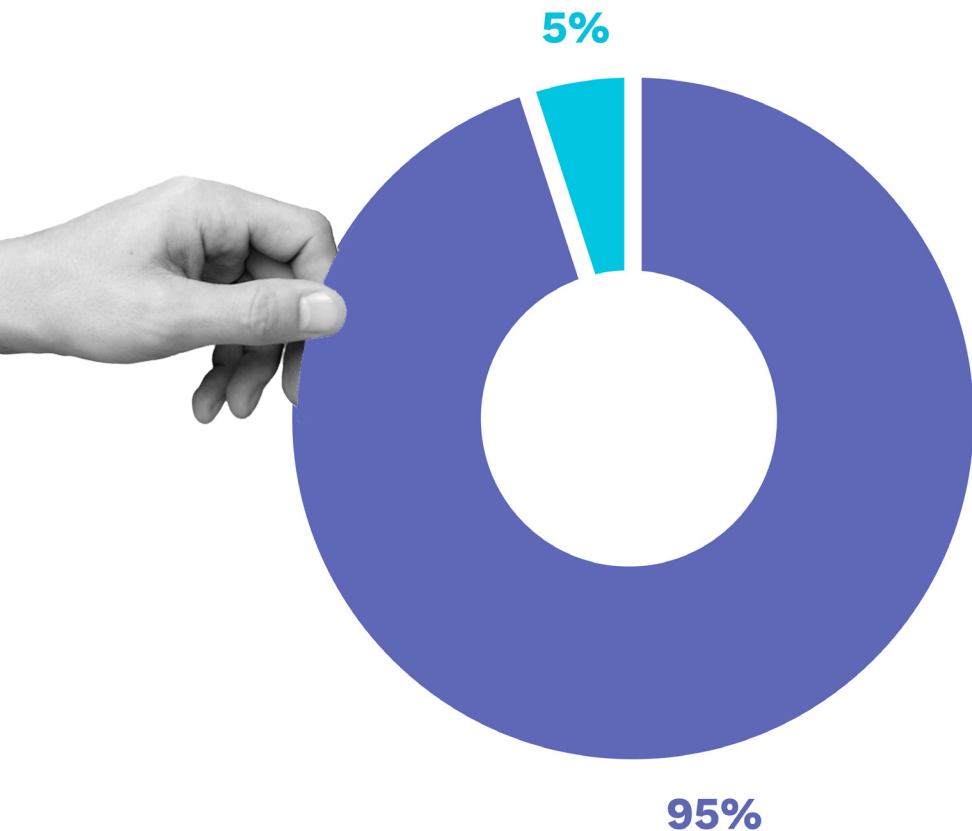
Does your in-house creative team have any specific metrics to track the impact and/or output of creative and marketing efforts?

- Track Specific Metrics
- Does Not Track Specific Metrics

95%

Lytho

MEET THE EXPERT

Sadie Thomas
Creative & Marketing Manager at SportsArt Fitness

With nearly 15 years of experience designing for a wide range of companies with varying stages of brand awareness and identities, her creative strategy focuses on process, design principles, and attention to details.

When Sadie Thomas first started with SportsArt Fitness there was no project management or system in place to manage the creative work, but she knew it was important to find a way to track the work the team was doing and provide those metrics back to the organization.

For over five years, Sadie has been tracking design team metrics, year-over- year getting more sophisticated – going from tracking manually via spreadsheets to pulling reports from their creative operations platform. Last year as Sadie was promoted to Creative & Marketing Manager and now oversees both the design and marketing functions, she knew she was going to need to lean on metrics to show the tremendous amount of work the team was doing.

The first step in getting a full picture view of what her team was doing was to get the marketing function up and running in Lytho. Up until that point, the core users were primarily the design team and the marketing team wasn't fully using Lytho to manage projects. There was some hesitation from the marketing team, but through some show and tell, Sadie was able to prove the value of the platform to her team by showing how building out projects and campaigns can give her the information to advocate for her team – showcasing the amount of work they produce.

As the marketing team got up and running in Lytho, they were able to pull reports that showed a full picture of the work being done per projects. The number of projects being completed remained relatively consistent but the number of tasks being completed grew by about 50% because all the work the marketing team was doing for the project was now being accounted for.

The team has been evolving and trying to be more proactive for their stakeholders and better anticipate their needs. They

are planning ahead and creating work independently, which has helped significantly reduce the number of requests they are getting.

Because of the metrics foundation that Sadie has built, she is able to show that the decrease in requests is a positive and is able to show the amount of work her team is doing through tasks and projects.

As SportsArt's needs expanded, they implemented Lytho DAM. As they were onboarding and outlining their taxonomy structure, Sadie realized that there was a great opportunity to carry the tagging structure back into the workflow functionality. This gave Sadie a new angle on reporting – tags!

Year-over-year the metrics and reporting that Sadie puts together continues to evolve, but one thing remains consistent. The importance of reporting those metrics back to organization. Through tracking metrics Sadie has been able to advocate for her team and show numerical data to other's within the organization that might not see the end result of the work the team produces.

Sadie's Advice:

Start by picking just one area or metric to start tracking and expand from there. Once you figure out one thing and start tracking it. It will grow from there.

Favorite Metric:

Total Time Tracked – People don't realize how time-consuming creative projects take and being able to show the actual numbers is really eye opening.

Asset Approval Process Metrics

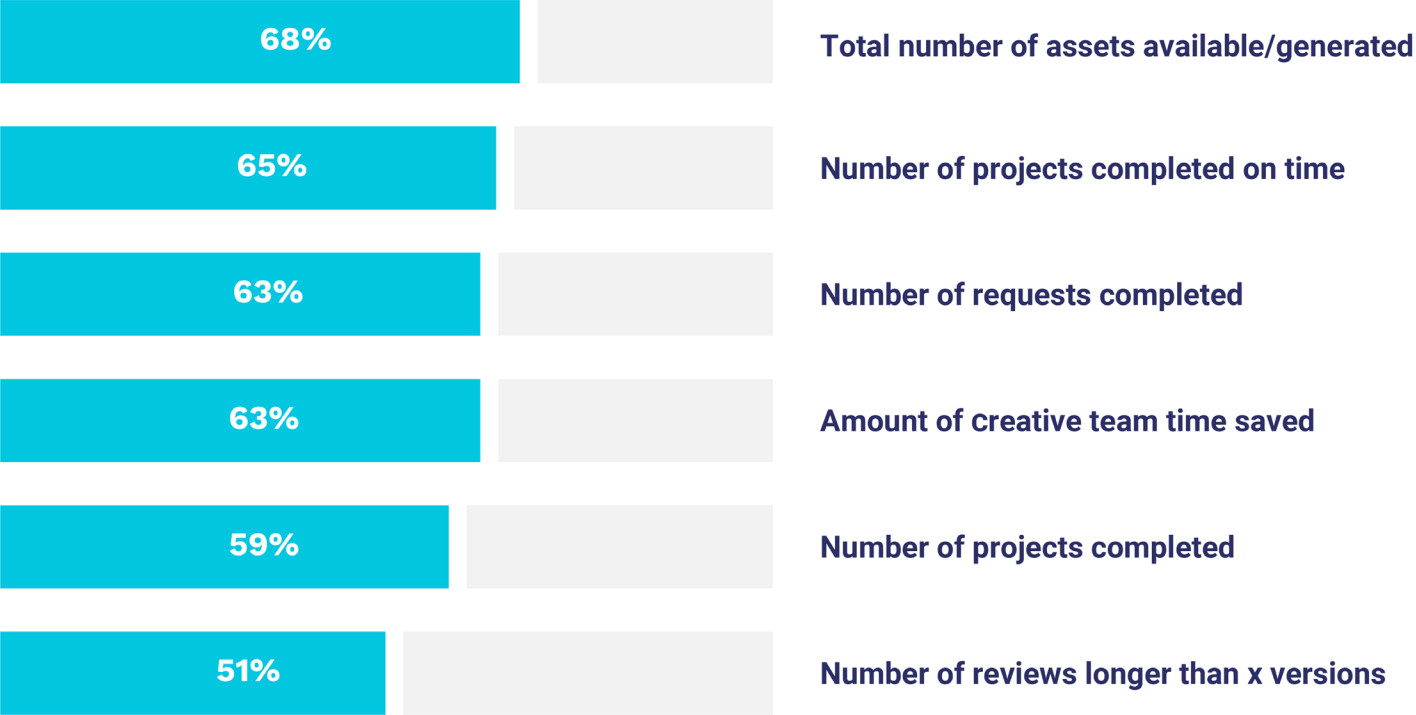Time for review and approval are top metrics measured by in-house creative teams

Which of the following asset approval (leading) metrics does your in-house creative team measure?

70%	Time from brief to acceptance/approval request
64%	Overall review duration
63%	Volume of deliverables shared
62%	Volume of outputs generated via templating
62%	Top assets shared
58%	Number of review versions
52%	Time from brief to first proof

Performance Metrics

Volume of assets and timeliness of deliverables are the top performance metrics monitored

Which of the following output (lagging) metrics does your in-house creative team measure?

68%	Total number of assets available/generated
65%	Number of projects completed on time
63%	Number of requests completed
63%	Amount of creative team time saved
59%	Number of projects completed
51%	Number of reviews longer than x versions

MEET THE EXPERT

Erika Ruiz
Vice President of Creative at PPI Beauty

Erika has over 15 years of experience in Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG), focusing on beauty and wellness. Centered within the in-house environment, she builds teams to create objective, quality work that delivers strategic branding initiatives to her business partners.

Ever since the very beginning, Erika has relied on Lytho's Creative Operations Platform to stay on top of PPI Beauty's 250+ items. When the conglomerate decided to unify its brands, the project management tools being used lacked the functionality she and her team needed to be successful, "and the needs were really high". Even worse, the in-house creative team she needed was, at the time, virtually non-existent.

With no-one but a couple of freelancers by her side, she set out to execute her vision for the newly merged beauty giant. A vital piece of that plan for Erika was to create a proper in-house team and arm them with the right processes and workflows so they can effectively collaborate with all external and internal stakeholders, and so they can meet their evolving and ever-changing business and creative needs.

At the same time, Erika needed full visibility and and access to things like like current bandwidth, as she

wants her team to retain control over their workload. With all that in mind, Erika advocated for Lytho's solution once again. The response from her stakeholders was positive – they were impressed by Lytho's dedicated product team, who work hard to keep the platform updated. The team is constantly adding new features to respond to and cover the needs of creative and marketing teams.

Lytho, Erika says, is the only creative operations platform that offers the right report visualization and routing capabilities she requires to ensure smooth operations and meet the demands of her stakeholders. In her extensive efforts to support her team, she uses Lytho to track volume of work, time spent on tasks and projects, and the time her creative team spends on each retailer against results to determine the level of effort required.

By using the same time-tracking metrics, Erika can

identify which projects her team has completed, the ones they are currently on track for, and the ones they are behind on. In combining all the data Lytho's platform provides, she could demonstrate how her creative team required additional resources to cope with the amount of work they had on their hands. The result? Her creative team was given the freelancers they needed!

The possibilities Lytho's Creative Operations Platform offers are endless. Lytho's tags functionality help Erika pull reports by brand and by category, which offers her the level of granularity she needs to pivot when necessary. And the mandatory custom fields she has required as part of the creative request process ensure she and her team always receive a minimum threshold of information with every request coming in.

Erika's Advice:

- **Start small to get the feel of the information that you actively use.**
- **Set up custom views to speak to the metrics you are really tracking.**
- **Audit the information you have in the system for currency and efficiency.**
- **Ensure your stakeholders can easily understand what you present to them.**

Favorite Metric:

Level of Effort – Erika loves to track her team's level of effort for each of the 3+ PPI Beauty sub-brands.

# Data Input to Workflow/Project Management Solution
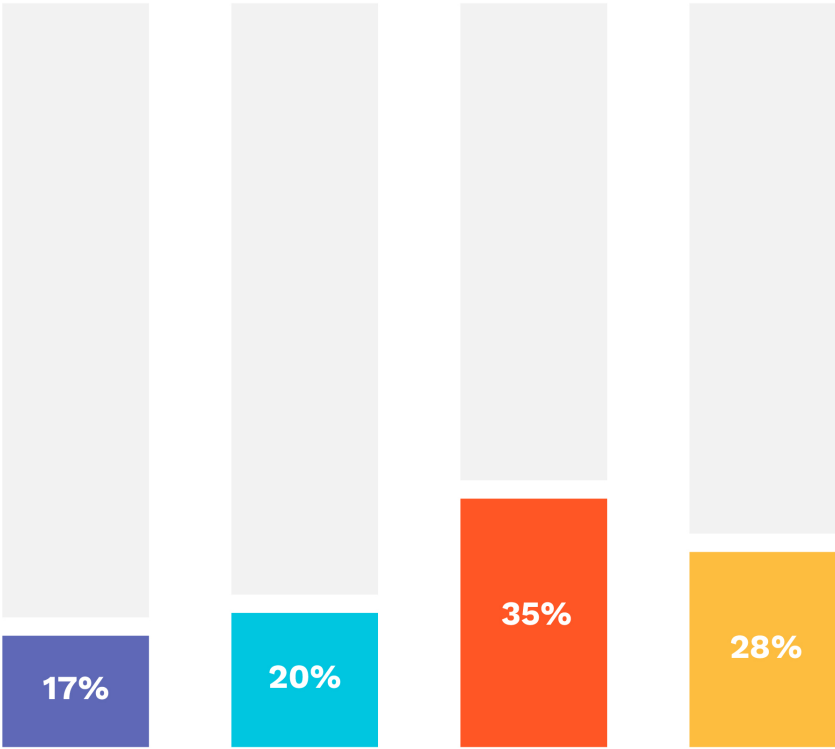
How long has your in-house creative team been tracking performance metrics?

- Have been tracking metrics for over a year
- Have been tracking metrics for 7-12 months
- Have been tracking metrics for 3-6 months
- Started tracking metrics within the last 3 months

17%

20%

35%

28%

Lytho

Method for Tracking Metrics

The vast majority of respondents' teams have a reasonable level of sophistication with the tools used for tracking leading and lagging metrics

10%

57%

33%
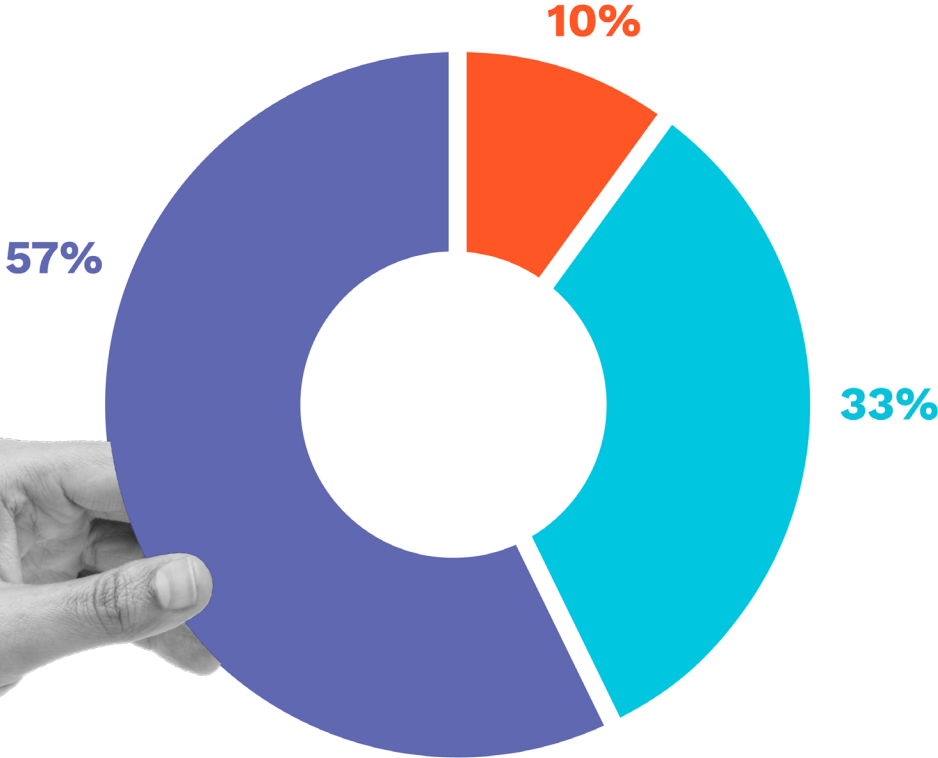
How does your in-house creative team track performance metrics?

- ● We have a creative operations platform that can pull together reports
- ● Metrics are pulled from multiple softwares and tools
- ● It is a highly manual process with a lot of spreadsheets and manual effort

Lytho

MEET THE EXPERT

Mark Tucci
Creative Services Manager at Community Transit

Mark has been designing and overseeing production of award-winning advertising and marketing campaigns for 20 years. Originally starting out as a radio DJ, he transitioned to the world of television and eventually fell into post-production work, producing and editing scores of TV commercials and promos before migrating to digital and print design, and eventually landing a role in marketing. After many years working in the cable industry, Mark joined the team at Community Transit in Everett Washington as their Creative Services Manager, where he leads a multi-talented group of artists and designers. During that time Mark has helped to mentor and uplevel the team's in-house skills while overhauling their entire workflow process, which included onboarding and managing the Lytho's Creative Operations Platform.

When Mark started using Lytho, he immediately jumped at the opportunities that the creative operations platform offers. Mark oversees the creative services team – an internal group comprised of artists, designers, photographers, illustrators, videographers who produce all creative assets for the agency. This ranges from advertising and promotional collateral, vehicle graphics and wraps, to route maps, signage, employee-facing materials, and more. Since the team is primarily designers, they partner up with copywriters from the marketing and communications team on various projects.

"I am fascinated by the data that Lytho provides – with it, we can demonstrate our real value and what we bring to the organization."

Internally, Mark uses the metrics Lytho provides to help build team morale by showing progress and improvements and celebrating with the team all they have accomplished. Externally, the metrics help him provide stakeholders with a comprehensive and functional overview of what the marketing team has been working on. He does so with a report that includes current projects broken down by their current status, as well as who the requester and requesting departments are. This snapshot helps everyone understand the team's current workload and bandwidth.

Lytho's metrics allow Mark to predict highs and lows in productivity. Despite the atypical nature of the data captured during the COVID-19 pandemic, now on their third year using Lytho, the team's recorded output is higher than ever. Mark strengthened his reporting with additional layers such as the level of effort and complexity for each project to give everyone a better view of what's happening. He assigns work by audience – adding priority to external-facing projects. Lytho also helps him track how much work was completed for a year-over-year analysis.

At the end of the year Mark pulls aggregate data on completion times, tracking projects completed ahead of schedule, on-time,

and which projects were overdue when delivered. He uses the favorable data to further demonstrate the value his team brings to the organization. On the flip side, the very same data helps him pinpoint what went wrong with clear precision. By further breaking project segments down by completion time and complexity level, he tells stories that resonate with his stakeholders.

The metrics and data helped to structure review tiers in collaboration with stakeholders to improve workflow. Leveraging Lytho's Creative Operations Platform, Mark and his team have successfully narrowed down the number of reviewers needed, and the level of effort stakeholders must put into each project. The department has also continued to refine their request forms for additional clarity. They also tweaked the review prompt description, added additional context within the review itself, and assigned a key decision maker to deal with and reconcile conflicting feedback scenarios.

And Mark's metric mastery did not stop there – he used the Lytho data to determine which tasks his team carried out were the most time-consuming, and where additional help might be needed. Given Community Transit's public character and commitment to thoroughness, he has leveraged metrics in making the case for hiring a coordinator. "I am fascinated by the data that Lytho provides – with it, we can demonstrate our real value and what we bring to the organization."

Saying that Community Transit has embraced Mark's end-of-year metrics would be an understatement. By using Lytho's extensive data pull, Mark has successfully transformed his creative team into an impressive paradox – a creative team that doubles up as the data champion of the organization.

Mark's Advice:

For better or for worse, many people look at productivity as a measure of worth. Mark advocates for the success of a particular deliverable instead.

Favorite Metric:

Request Intake – Mark likes to see the trends of what's coming and going; a barometer of what his team has on their plate.

Evaluation of Metrics Tracked

Respondents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the metrics their teams are tracking and believe they are being used by their teams

1% 1%

98%

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

1%

99%
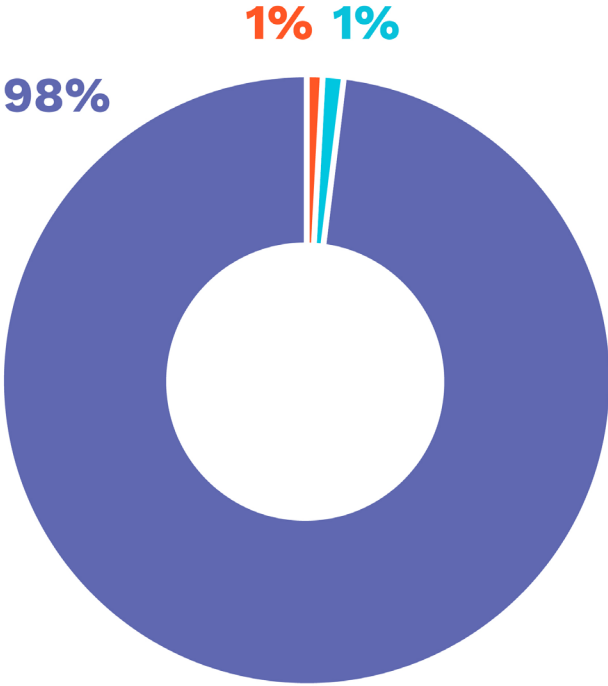
Tracking performance metrics informs my team's actions.
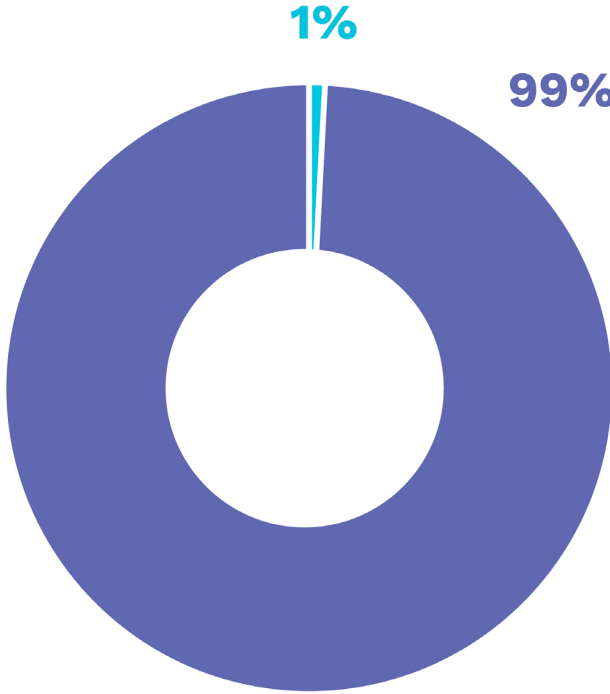
My team has been tracking the right performance metrics.
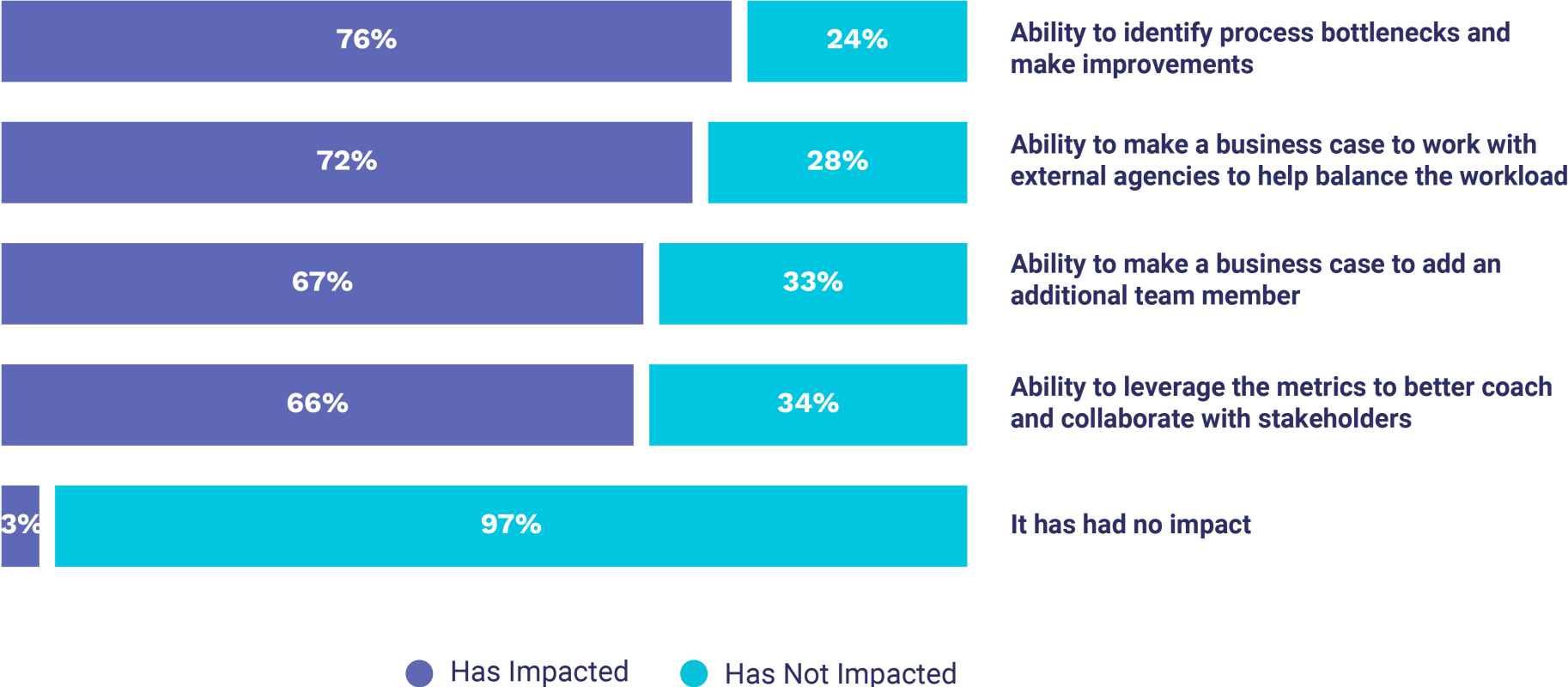
Impact of Tracking on In-House Teams

Improvement of workflow efficiency is the top impact respondents observe from their team's metrics tracking

What impact has tracking metrics had on your in-house creative team process?

76%	24%	Ability to identify process bottlenecks and make improvements
72%	28%	Ability to make a business case to work with external agencies to help balance the workload
67%	33%	Ability to make a business case to add an additional team member
66%	34%	Ability to leverage the metrics to better coach and collaborate with stakeholders
3%	97%	It has had no impact

● Has Impacted   ● Has Not Impacted

Lytho

MEET THE EXPERT

Cherise Oleson
Senior Creative Director at Franklin Energy

As Senior Creative Director serving both Franklin Energy and AM Conservation Group, Cherise Oleson oversees creative projects for both corporate and utility clients. She leads a content and design team with broad capabilities and manages a diverse range of projects from the creation of logos to product packaging, program collateral, videos, online stores, reporting documents, and more. When she's not working, she enjoys spending time with her family, singing or playing the piano, and playing games.

Cherise hit the metrics ground running, leveraging extensive reports for project management to keep everything on track from day one. Franklin Energy's current structure means that her creative team sits under the wider marketing team as its own pod and receives creative requests from and sends detailed reporting to the marketing team.

Lytho's metrics have provided Cherise with no less than 321 reports that have been serving as one of the main drives behind the team's ongoing restructuring. One of the key metrics being tracked is internal corporate work vs client work – with the executive team paying close attention to both. For Franklin Energy's leadership team, properly distributing time for internal and external work is crucial to their operations. Other reports, such as project types (email, direct mail, product packaging, etc,) were also highly important for the leadership as they helped guide the decision for restructuring the marketing delivery team.

To that end, Cherise and other managers in the organization use status reports to ensure that work is evenly distributed across team members. The reports also provide their teams with ongoing and valuable performance insights and feedback, meaning they suffer fewer bottlenecks tied to a lack of performance visibility.

When asked to name the Lytho tool that brings the most value to Franklin Energy, Cherise pointed at Resource Management. The organization uses the Specialties functionality to view available members by specialization. They then identify the type of work sitting with each member at any given time using Workload View. In doing so, they can quickly assign work to available team members faster than ever before.

Cherise's Advice: Start with how many projects are currently open and how many projects you and your team have completed this year, as this always positively surprises stakeholders.

Favorite Metrics: Volume of Work/Number of Projects Completed in a Year – It is how Cherise accesses the data necessary to showcase the creative team's value and contribution and reports it to the wider marketing team.
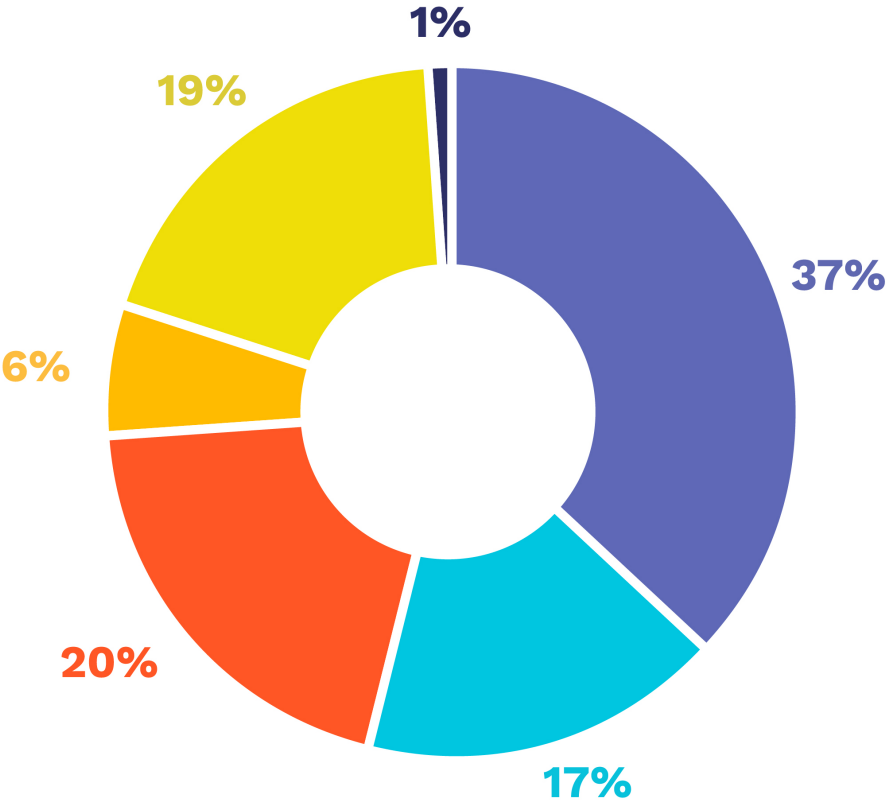
Respondents' Profile

Respondents' Role

Most respondents (54%) consider themselves to be part of a creative role verse **marketing role (26%)**

- **19%** are in an operational/ project management role
- **1%** are in a freelancer role

Most respondents were in a **management role (57%)**

Which of the following best describes your primary responsibility as it relates to the creative team?

- 37%
- 1%
- 19%
- 6%
- 20%
- 17%

- Manage in-house creative team
- Creative role on the in-house creative or marketing team
- Manage in-house marketing team
- Marketing role on the in-house marketing team
- Project mgt/operational support role on the in-house creative or marketing team
- Freelancer/contractor embedded in an in-house creative or marketing team
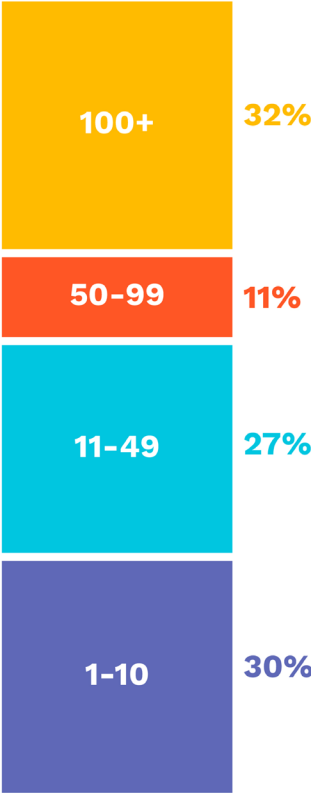
Lytho

Respondents' Team and Organization

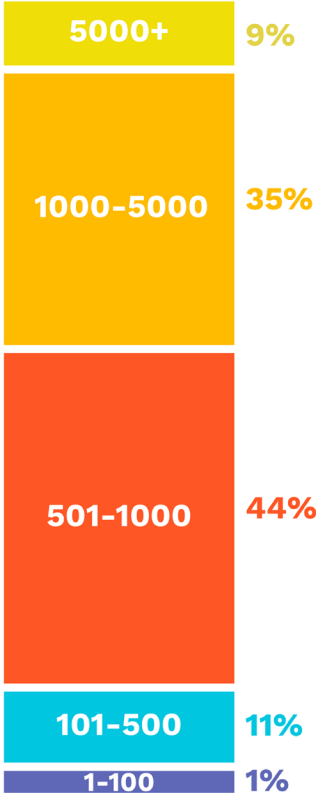**How many people are considered to be part of the in-house creative team?**
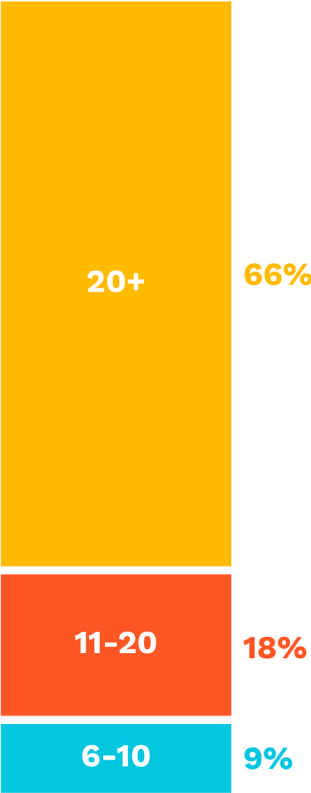
How many internal clients/stakeholders does your in-house creative team have?

Which size range represents the overall size of your company?

Team Size

- 20+ — 66%
- 11–20 — 18%
- 6–10 — 9%

Internal Clients

- 100+ — 32%
- 50–99 — 11%
- 11–49 — 27%
- 1–10 — 30%

Company Size

- 5000+ — 9%
- 1000–5000 — 35%
- 501–1000 — 44%
- 101–500 — 11%
- 1–100 — 1%

Lytho

Respondents' Industry

Technology was the most represented industry equaling
31% of respondents

What industry best describes your organization?

31% Technology/Software

16% Manufacturing

13% Retail

6% Banking

6% Consumer Packaged Goods

5% Financial Services

5% Telecommunication

3% Health Care

2% Entertainment

2% Government

2% Hospitals

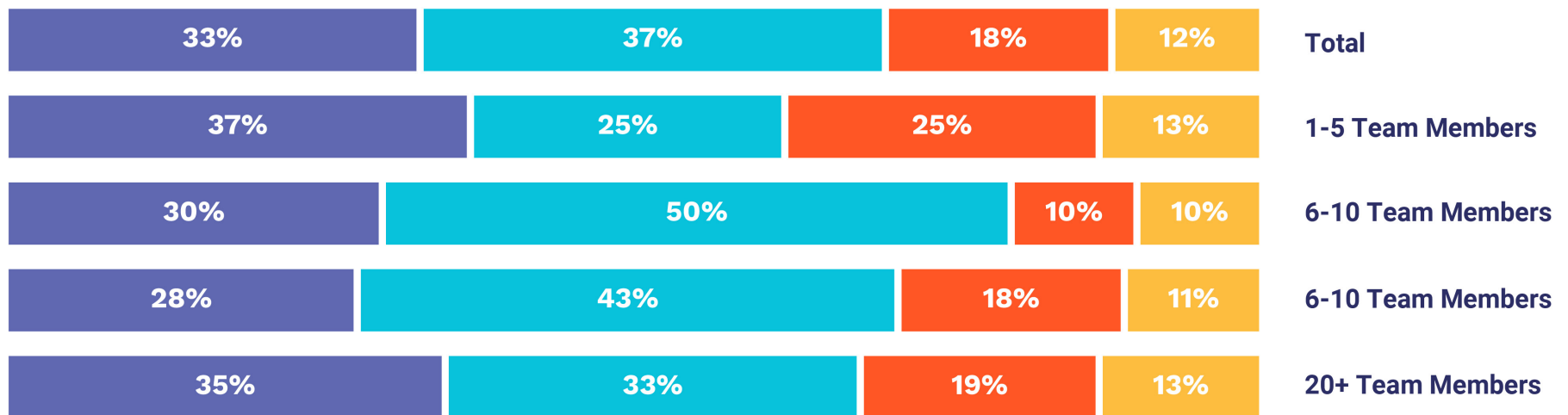**1%** Insurance

7% Other

Lytho

Type of Team

Most teams (**55%**) do a mix of tactical and strategic work but the mix is different depending on the size of the team

Which most closely reflects your in-house creative team's current state?

33%	37%	18%	12%	Total
37%	25%	25%	13%	1-5 Team Members
30%	50%	10%	10%	6-10 Team Members
28%	43%	18%	11%	6-10 Team Members
35%	33%	19%	13%	20+ Team Members

● **Pure production services** – All tactical/production work. Receive all strategy and direction from external agency partner

● **Evolving in-house agency** – Mostly tactical/production work with some strategic work and original concepting

● **In-house agency** – Regularly involved in strategic work and original concepting, but still some tactical/production work

● **Pure strategic services** – Only strategic work. Direct external agency partners on original concepting and tactical/production work

Lytho

Lytho

2022 | Q4

CREATIVE
OPERATIONS
REPORT

In-House Creative Teams
Are Leveraging Metrics
to Make an Impact