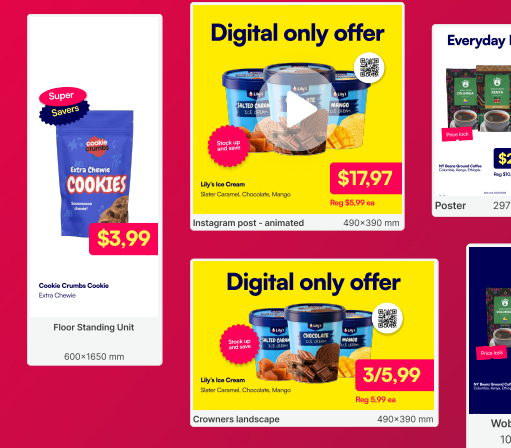


Creative Automation for Grocery Retail

Buyer's Guide

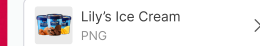
Six questions every creative operations leader should ask before signing — and what a real answer looks like.



At Retail Speed 2026

Customize

Product image



Region

Europe

Country

UK

Language

English

Currency

£

Deal

25%

Tagline

Everyday Deals

All layouts

Poster

Instagram post

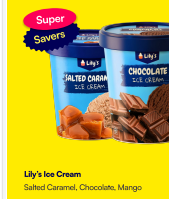
Everyday Deals



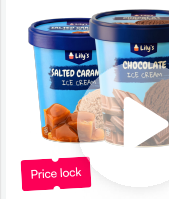
Everyday Deals



Everyday Deals



Everyday Deals



The cost of the status quo

Grocery retail marketing teams are running a production sprint every week. New promotions. New pricing. New markets. New formats. **The challenge is not creative, it is operational.**

The bottleneck is production. And it has real financial consequences that extend far beyond the marketing operations budget. In Brandwidth 2026, **40% of grocery retail marketing leaders named approval and review cycles as the single biggest constraint on speed, and 52% said central teams have become bottlenecks that local markets work around.**

A price error in a promotional leaflet reaching a million households is not a design problem. It is a legal and financial incident. A missed promotional window is not a scheduling inconvenience. It is lost basket revenue and a gap in your retail media promise to FMCG partners. And every peak season managed without the right infrastructure is a peak season managed with agency overtime or hired headcount — cost that is real, recurring, and preventable.

“

 COLRUYTGROUP

“By unifying how we work and automating recurring tasks, we were able to free up significant time and resources for the more complex marketing initiatives requiring human creativity and ingenuity.”

— Kathleen Bauwens, Colruyt Group

71%

of grocery retail teams experienced a promo production failure — a pricing error, a wrong product, or a missed regulatory requirement — in the last two years.

(Brandwidth 2026)

1 in 2

grocery retail marketers miss or delay promotional windows due to promo production delays.

(Brandwidth 2026)

What you are actually buying

Most vendor evaluations focus on features and price.

The grocery retail buyer who frames this correctly asks a different question:
Which platform eliminates the specific risks my operation faces every week?

A platform genuinely built for grocery retail must deliver three things, not as nice-to-haves, but as **structural capabilities**:

#1 Automated production connected to live data

Not template fill-in. Logic-based asset production that understands your pricing rules, discount schemas, and promotional mechanics, and executes them without manual input, without errors, every cycle.

#2 Compliance and auditability built into the system

Compliance is not a checklist. It is either structurally encoded (in Design Systems, data integrations, version-controlled legal copy) or it is a manual process with residual risk. The platform either makes errors impossible or it does not.

#3 Self-service from HQ to store without brand risk

Local teams produce locally relevant materials within guardrails that make off-brand output structurally impossible. Otherwise they find workarounds through Canva, Powerpoint, Claude, or working with local agencies.

The right evaluation question is not “which platform has the most features.” It is: “which platform eliminates my specific operational risk.”



The six questions that separate real solutions from nice demos

Bring these to every vendor conversation. A strong platform answers all six concretely and without qualification. A platform that defers, hedges, or pivots is telling you something.

Print at scale and platform ownership, the questions that thin the field.



Questions

01 How do you handle full print POS complexity, wobblers, shelf talkers, danglers, floor stickers, simultaneously with digital output?

02 Who owns our Design System: us or you? And what does it cost us to change a template?



A weak answer

"We handle print," then a demo of basic PDF export. The platform is really built for digital but print is an afterthought, with no real prepress expertise (bleed, CMYK, format-specific specs). That fixes only half the problem.

⚠ Watch out — Most platforms are strong on digital and quietly weak on print. Make them prove print live, not just a PDF export.

Vague assurances about "access" and "collaboration," without a clear statement that the client owns the Design System and can modify it independently, at no additional cost.

⚠ Watch out — Legacy vendors charge upwards of \$50,000 for a single template conversion.



What good looks like

Clear, demonstrable print and prepress expertise (bleed, CMYK, format-specific output) produced alongside digital from one connected Design System, with print and digital equally evolved and equally important. Ask to see a wobbler and a digital banner from the same campaign, live.

The client owns the Design System outright. Because the platform is built for the brand marketing team rather than the vendor, changes are made in-house, without vendor involvement or cost.

The six questions that separate real solutions from nice demos

Live data and brand control, the questions vendors hedge.

?

Questions

03 Can you connect directly to our pricing system and eliminate manual price entry, or do we still own that risk?

04 How does your platform prevent local teams from producing off-brand or non-compliant materials, without creating a bottleneck that forces them to go around the system?

✗

A weak answer

"Yes, we can integrate," without specifying the mechanism, the data flow, or whether manual re-entry still exists anywhere in the process.

"We have approval workflows," a governance process, not a governance architecture. Approval workflows still require human review; they do not make non-compliant output impossible.

⚠ Watch out — One manual re-entry point is all it takes for a wrong price to reach a million households. Find every place a human still touches the price.

⚠ Watch out — Approval workflows are not brand governance. If compliance depends on someone catching it, off-brand output is only a matter of time.

✓

What good looks like

A direct, live connection to your pricing system.
The price in the layout is the price in the system.
No manual entry, no spreadsheet handoff.
Ask to see the connector architecture.

Brand governance built into the Design System.
Local teams cannot produce non-compliant output because the system does not permit it.
The guardrails are structural, not procedural.

The six questions that separate real solutions from nice demos

Change and scale, the questions that only surface after signature.

?

Questions

05 If a regulator or FMCG partner asks us to reconstruct what price was shown in which market during which promotional period, what does your audit trail look like?

06 Show us this campaign in Arabic, Japanese and Cyrillic. Then tell us how many templates changed to get there, and what happens when the promotional mechanic changes next quarter.

×

A weak answer

"We keep records" or "you can export outputs," without a system-level audit trail tracing every output to its data input, Design System version, and the user who triggered it.

⚠ Watch out — If they can't reconstruct what price ran where and when, you carry the regulatory risk, not them. "We keep records" is not an audit trail.

"We support Unicode," or a font list, or an offer to look into it. Any answer where right-to-left is described as a layout setting rather than a rendering behavior. Any answer where the market count and the template count move together.

⚠ Watch out — Right-to-left is not mirrored left-to-right. Ask to see a price flash, a disclaimer and a multi-buy mechanic in the same Arabic layout, because that is where most platforms come apart. And every demo you see will run one market and one mechanic, so the multiplication stays invisible until you are live.

✓

What good looks like

A full audit trail at the system level: every output traceable to data source and version, Design System version, user, timestamp, and market. Ask to see the audit log.

Arabic shaping, right-to-left flow, CJK and Cyrillic set correctly from the Design System that produced the English asset. Currency, decimals and dates are market parameters. Promo logic lives in a Component, so a new promo type is built once and every template reflects it. Ask the vendor how they do the same.

Vendor Scorecard

The six questions, turned into an actionable scoring tool.

QUESTION	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	VENDOR A	VENDOR B	VENDOR C
01 Full print POS + digital	A direct, live connection. No manual price entry.	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
02 Own the Design System	One Design System outputs both print and digital.	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
03 Direct pricing system connection	Changes made in-house. No vendor fees.	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
04 Governance without bottlenecks	Non-compliant output impossible by design.	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
05 System-level audit trail	Every output traceable to data, version and user.	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
06 Non-Latin scripts + component mechanics	No separate Design Systems, change once, everywhere	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
TOTAL		____ /12	____ /12	____ /12



SCORING GUIDE

2

Proven live during the demo

1

Claimed but not demonstrated

0

Couldn't show it



INTERPRETING THE TOTAL

10-12

Built for grocery retail complexity

6-9

Real gaps to probe before you sign

0-5

Not built for your operation.

The compliance problem nobody talks about in a vendor demo

Where the legal exposure actually lives.

Grocery retail carries more regulatory exposure per marketing asset than almost any other vertical. It shows up in fines, reprints, FMCG credit notes, and legal proceedings. It is not hypothetical.

33%

of leaders say that when campaigns fail, the fallout includes legal or regulatory exposure from incorrect pricing or non-compliant materials.

(Brandwidth 2026)



Pricing Accuracy

Most markets require retailers to honor printed prices. An error in a high-circulation leaflet creates exposure that cannot be corrected after distribution.



Allergen and Product Information

Mandatory disclosure requirements vary by market and are enforced. Post-distribution correction is not possible.



Promotional Regulations

Percentage-off claims, multi-buy mechanics, loyalty terms, alcohol restrictions, and protected designation of origin rules differ by country and change regularly.



Legal Fine Print and Disclaimers

Promotion terms, validity dates, unit pricing, and “while stocks last” wording are legally required and routinely audited. Fine print that is missing or incorrect, is a compliance breach.



Language Requirements

Many markets legally require specific languages on consumer-facing materials.



European Accessibility Act

Increasingly applies to digital and print. Requirements must be encoded at source, not added later.

Manual process vs. Compliance by design

Accuracy is now the priority. Asked what they most want new automation to solve, grocery retail marketing leaders put reducing errors in data-driven content — pricing, product information, and regulatory copy — ahead of speed or cost **(41%)**. *(Brandwidth 2026)*

The key question:

Does your platform make non-compliant output impossible, or does it rely on humans to catch it?

Without a Compliant Platform		With Compliance by Design
Manual price entry, transcription risk at every campaign	→	Direct pricing system feed, price in layout = price in system
Checklist-based compliance review	→	Compliance encoded in Design System, enforced automatically
Version sprawl across markets	→	Single source of truth per market, version-controlled, auditable
No audit trail	→	Full auditability, every output traceable to data source, version, and user
Per-country review bottleneck	→	Legal copy variants managed in system, compliant by construction

“

“A pricing error that enters the production pipeline propagates across every variant it touches — print, digital, animated, every market, every store.”

(Brandwidth 2026)

What peer retailers have already decided

These are not projections. These are documented outcomes from retailers already operating at scale on CHILI GraFx, including leading grocery groups in Europe.



8M

locally priced POS displays /
month across 1,200 stores.
Design Systems connected to
live pricing. Every display
accurate, every format
production-ready.



80%

of creative tasks executed
independently by brand
marketers. 30 brands, 774 stores.
40% of agency resources freed.



1,800

stores. Production bottleneck
eliminated. Store-level localization
without a central-team bottleneck.

What your current workflow is costing you

Creative Automation ROI in grocery retail comes from three distinct cost pools. Each is measurable from data your team already has. Most teams have never added them up.

#1



Production Capacity

Designers spend 40–60% of their time on repetitive adaptation. For a team of ten designers at a fully-loaded annual cost of \$95K each, that is over \$380,000 per year.

FORMULA

Designers × % time on adaptation × Annual Fully-Loaded Cost

#2



Self-Service Gap

Every request local teams cannot fulfill lands in the central queue or becomes a workaround.
49% of leaders say production failures land on the team as burnout.

FORMULA

Self-Service Requests × Avg. Designer Hours × Hourly Cost

#3



Compliance Risk and Agency Dependency

Agency costs scale linearly in a manual model; incidents add remediation cost. Among teams reporting a costly incident, more than half put the **cost between \$10,000 and \$50,000 per event.**

FORMULA

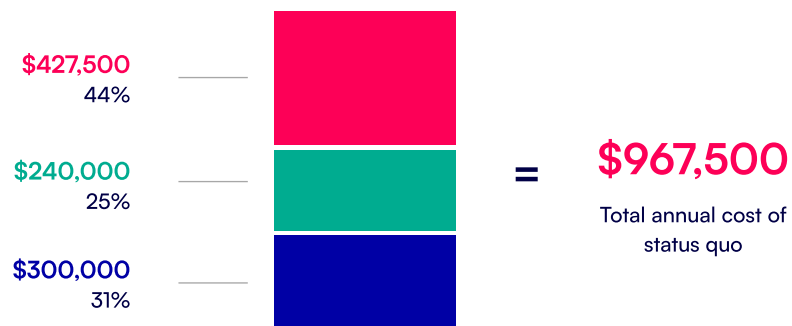
Agency Spend × % Attributable to Adaptation × Compliance Incident Cost

Illustrative example of a global consumer goods brand: 10 in-house designers, 2,400 design requests a year, and \$650K in agency spend.



¹ Based on customer data. Actual payback varies by organization.

COST BREAKDOWN (STATUS QUO)



HOW CHILI GRAFX REMOVES THE COST

GraFx Studio Recovers ~60% of adaptation time	~\$256,500 (pool 1)
GraFx Experience Eliminates ~70% of designer dependency	~\$168,000 (pool 2)
CHILI GraFx Clears 85% of agency adaptation spend	~\$260,000 (pool 3)

Annual Savings Recovered
(After CHILI GraFx) **~\$684,500**
leaving a residual near **\$283,000**

(Illustrative, derived from 800-store example, confirm against the live ROI calculator.)



Payback starts with your numbers

See your potential savings with a personalized ROI estimate and download a tailored business case report.

Calculate your ROI

CHILI GraFx: built for Creative Operations at scale

CHILI GraFx is not a template tool. It is a visual content automation platform — a system of record for creative production that connects design, data, brand governance, and output in a single integrated workflow.

Design once. Produce everywhere.

GraFx Studio turns static layouts into dynamic Design Systems. One Design System generates every variant — format, market, channel, language — automatically.

AI that accelerates, not replaces.

GraFx Genie cuts Design System creation time by up to 80%. AI Resizing, Smart Crop, Copy Fitting, and Auto-Grow handle the mechanical decisions so designers focus on the creative ones.

Self-service with brand control.

GraFx Experience gives non-designers access to approved, constrained Design Systems. Brand guidelines are enforced at the source, not policed after the fact.

A platform that integrates with everything.

API-first architecture and the Connector Framework link GraFx Studio to your existing DAM, PIM, CRM, and marketing stack. CHILI GraFx fits your ecosystem, it doesn't replace it.

Talk to a Creative Automation expert

We'll map your current workflow to the value model and show you what the business case looks like for your organization.

[Request a Demo](#) →

→ [Calculate your ROI](#)

→ [Assess your risk](#)

Trusted by global retail brands

