

# The ROI of Creative Automation

How to quantify the business value of CHILI GraFx, and build the case for investment.



# The gap between content demand and creative capacity is growing

Marketing teams are under pressure to produce more assets, for more channels, in more markets, without adding headcount or sacrificing brand quality.

But the tools most creative teams rely on were not built for this reality. Static templates require manual updates. Local adaptations pile up in queues. Agency briefs circle for weeks.

Our Brandwidth research found that 84% of brands say inefficiencies in their creative workflow are directly affecting their bottom line. And yet the most common response — more designers, more agency hours — only adds cost without solving the structural problem.

**CHILI GraFx is built to close that gap.**

By transforming static artwork into intelligent Design Systems, CHILI GraFx enables creative teams to do in minutes what previously took days. It empowers non-designers to self-serve on-brand content without touching a brief. And it removes the agency dependency for high-volume adaptation work that Design Systems handle automatically.

**This guide helps you calculate the ROI of creative automation, and build the business case to bring the CHILI GraFx platform into your organization.** The numbers are grounded in real customer outcomes. Where formulas appear, they power the same calculations as the [CHILI GraFx ROI Calculator](#).

**71% of retail marketing teams experienced a promo production failure in the last two years.**

**Only 11% say their process reliably prevents the next one.**

*Brandwidth 2026*

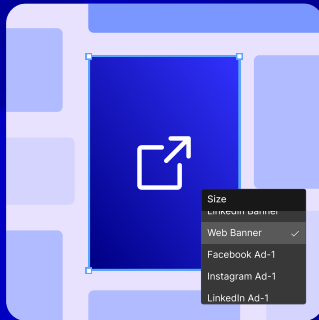


# Three pillars of your savings potential

#1

## Promo Production Capacity

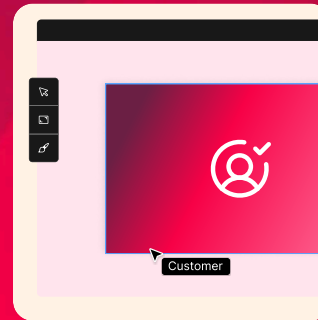
Reclaim the designer hours that disappear into repetitive adaptation work.



#2

## Self-Service at Scale

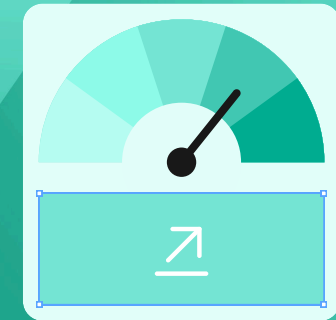
Enable non-designers to produce on-brand content without the queue or the brief.

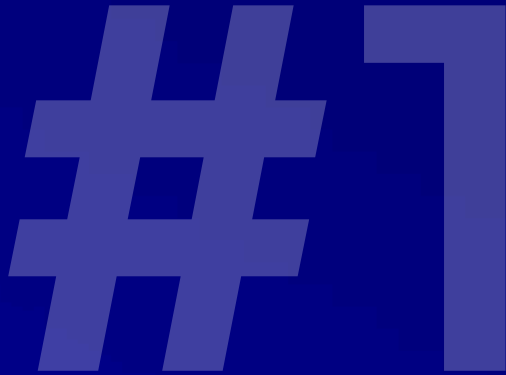


#3

## Agency Spend Reduction

Stop paying agency rates for work that Design Systems can do in seconds.



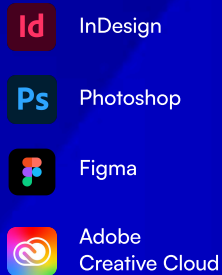


## Promo Production Capacity

*Reclaim the designer hours that disappear into repetitive work.*

### BEFORE

Manual tools.  
Manual work.



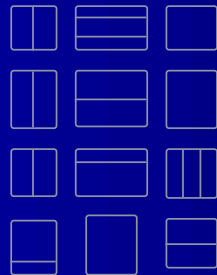
### AFTER

One system.  
Infinite output.



### OUTPUT

Campaign variants.  
On-brand. Every time.



## The hidden cost of manual adaptation

**Creative professionals spend between 40% and 60% of their time on repetitive production tasks rather than original creative work.**

For a senior designer at \$95,000 fully loaded, that is up to \$57,000 per year in salary spent on resizing, reformatting, and generating variants — work that requires little creative judgment. Across a team of 10, that is over half a million dollars annually.



### THE ANNUAL COST OF MANUAL PRODUCTION

Designer Salary (Fully Loaded)	% Time on Production	Team Size	Annual Cost of Production
\$95,000	x 60%	x 10	= \$575,000

**Guidance:** Survey your team or audit 30 days of project logs. Enterprise teams typically find 40–60% of designer time is spent on work that should be automated.

## CHILI GraFx eliminates this category of work.

When a design is built as a Design System, every format variant, market adaptation, and channel-specific version is generated automatically from a single source. Designers stop spending their time on production work and focus on high-impact creative.

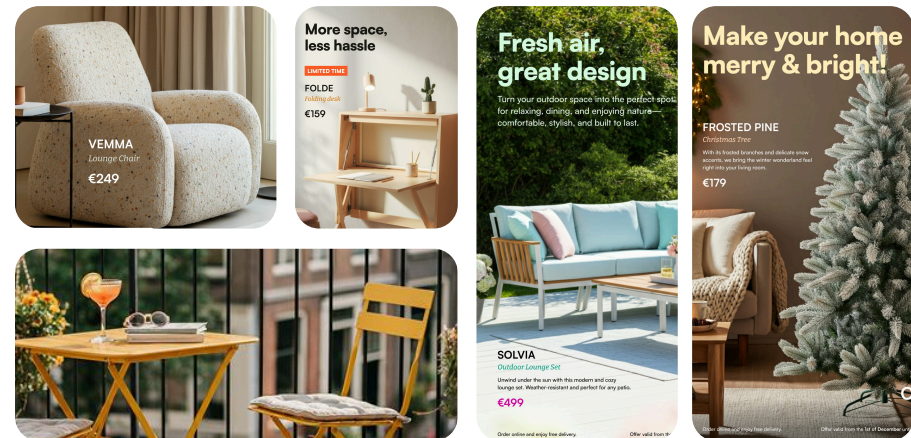
This approach takes a huge bite out of the number of separate files you would otherwise need. **A single Design System can contain many smart layouts, which can output endless variants across print, digital, and animated output intents.**

GraFx Genie, the platform's AI assistant, accelerates setup too, **reducing Design System creation time by up to 80%.** The investment in building the automation is itself dramatically lower than teams expect.

“

**GraFx Genie has reduced Design System creation time by up to 80%.**

— CHILI publish platform benchmark, GraFx Genie



One Design System. Every campaign variant on-brand.

# #2

## Self-Service at Scale

Stop being the bottleneck.  
Start driving on-brand execution



## The cost of designer dependency

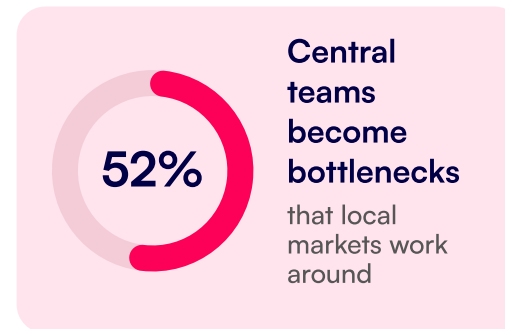
In most enterprise creative operations, the design team is the only path between a business need and a branded asset.

Every localization request, every format swap, every copy change lands in a queue. The direct cost is the designer's time. The indirect cost (late campaigns, off-brand workarounds, missed opportunities) is harder to measure but significantly larger.

### THE ANNUAL COST OF DESIGNER DEPENDENCY

$$\begin{matrix} \text{No. of self-} \\ \text{service requests} \\ \text{per year} \end{matrix} \times \begin{matrix} \text{Avg. designer} \\ \text{hours per} \\ \text{request} \end{matrix} \times \begin{matrix} \text{Hourly fully-} \\ \text{loaded} \\ \text{designer cost} \end{matrix} = \begin{matrix} \text{Annual Cost} \\ \text{of Designer} \\ \text{Dependency} \end{matrix}$$

**Guidance:** Count “simple” requests (resizes, copy swaps, market adaptations) from your project management tool over the last 90 days and multiply by four.



## Brand governance by design

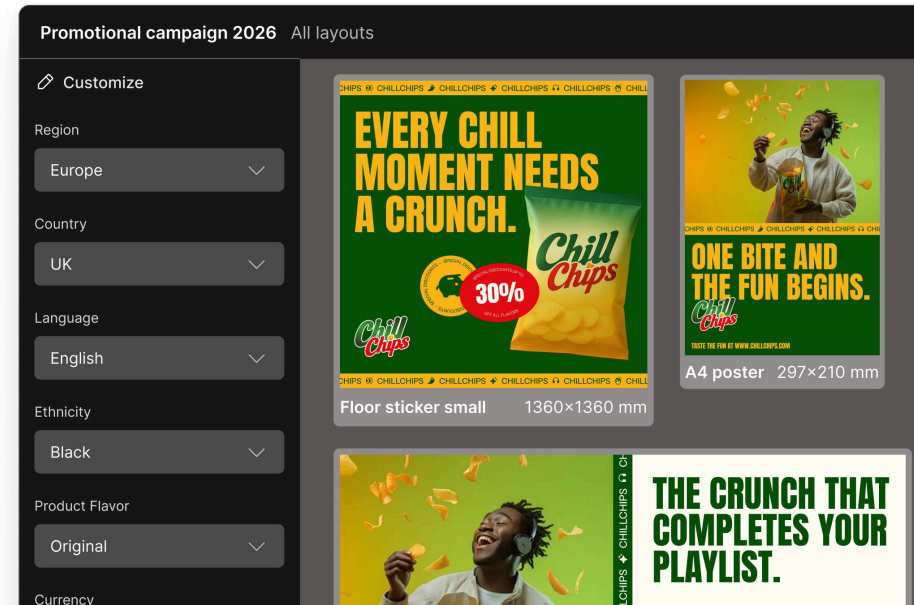
CHILI GraFx solves both. Through GraFx Experience, non-designers access approved, constrained Design Systems and produce on-brand content independently — no brief, no queue, no brand risk. The guardrails are built into the Design System. The designer's judgment scales infinitely from the moment of creation.

At Colruyt Group, one of Europe's largest retail chains, this model delivered a clear result: the in-house agency team now fully automates 35% of all recurring production orders through a self-service system built on CHILI GraFx.

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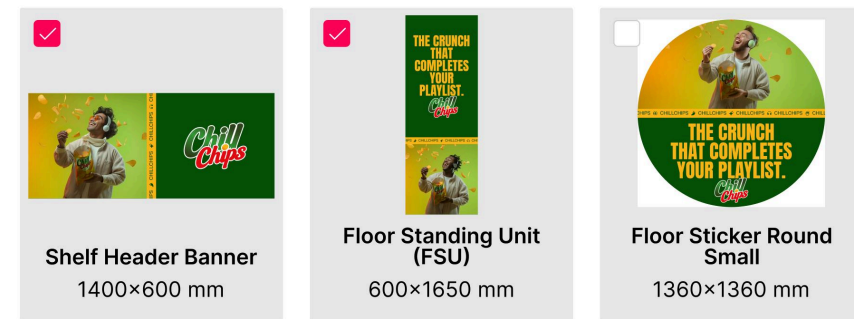
Through this self-service system based on CHILI GraFx, the in-house agency team fully automates 35% of our recurring orders.

— Kathleen Bauwens, Colruyt Group



### Select layouts

Select one or more layouts for Promotional Campaign 2026

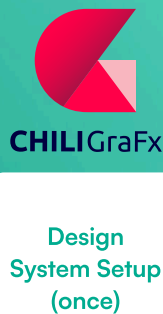
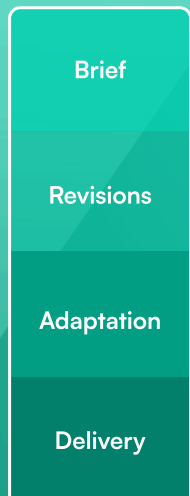


# #3

## Agency Spend Reduction

Stop paying agency rates for work that Design Systems should do.

### Agency Fees



## The adaptation tax

Every time a brand sends an asset to an agency for resizing, reformatting, or localizing, they pay an adaptation tax. The brief. The project setup. The revision rounds. The delivery. Then the next campaign, and the cycle repeats.

External agencies typically charge between \$150 and \$500 per hour for creative production work. A single multi-format, multi-market campaign adaptation can run to thousands of dollars. Across a full year, **the agency line in the creative operations budget often contains a substantial portion of work that Design Systems could handle automatically, for nothing.**

### THE ANNUAL AGENCY SPEND REDUCTION OPPORTUNITY

$$\text{Annual external agency spend} \times \% \text{ attributable to adaptation and versioning work} = \text{Annual agency cost of adaptation work}$$

**Guidance:** Review 12 months of agency invoices and flag resizing, localization, versioning, and format conversion line items. This is typically 30–50% of total production spend.

**When a promotional deadline is at risk, 43% of teams absorb it through overtime or emergency agency support.**

*Brandwidth 2026*

Once a GraFx Studio Design System is built, every adaptation is free. The investment happens once. Every output after that costs only the compute to render it.

HH Global, a global marketing production company working with some of the world's largest consumer brands, experienced this directly: by building on CHILI GraFx, they developed more VDP (Variable Data Printing) projects than ever before, without resorting to huge traditional agency fees.

“

CHILI GraFx enabled us to develop more VDP projects than ever before, without resorting to huge traditional agency fees. **Our clients jumped on board at the first go.**

— Gary George, HH Global

Designed for comfort. Styled for your home.

# Upgrade your space with VISTA, Julia

CRM

Product

DAM

LOWER PRICE

VISTA Book Shelf

Style and organization in one. This 6-tier shelf lets you display books, decor, and more while keeping your home tidy.

€159 €129

PIM

The advertisement features a 6-tier wooden bookshelf against a grey wall. The shelf is styled with books, a potted plant, a vase, and a lamp. A vertical line with circular markers connects callout boxes to specific elements: 'DAM' points to a book, 'Product' points to a shelf, 'CRM' points to the top right, and 'PIM' points to a book. A yellow 'LOWER PRICE' tag is placed above the product name 'VISTA Book Shelf'. The price is shown as '€159 €129' at the bottom left.

# Building your CHILI GraFx business case

## #1 PRODUCTION CAPACITY

$$\text{Designers} \times \% \text{ time on adaptation} \times \text{Annual fully-loaded cost} = \text{Annual production capacity cost}$$

## #2 DESIGNER DEPENDENCY

$$\text{Self-service requests/year} \times \text{Avg. designer hours} \times \text{Hourly Cost} = \text{Annual cost of designer dependency}$$

## #3 AGENCY SPEND

$$\text{Annual agency spend} \times \% \text{ spend on adaptation work} = \text{Annual agency cost of adaptation work}$$

## ROI & PAYBACK CALCULATION

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Potential Annual Savings} \\ &= \text{Pillar 1} + \text{Pillar 2} + \text{Pillar 3} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Total Year 1 Investment} \\ &= \text{Platform cost} + \text{Implementation} + \text{Training} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{ROI (Year 1)} \\ &= (\text{Savings} - \text{Investment}) \div \text{Investment} \times 100 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Payback period (months)} \\ &= (\text{Investment} \div \text{Savings}) \times 12 \end{aligned}$$

**For most CHILI GraFx customers, the payback period falls between 3 and 6 months.**

#1

## Calculate each pillar

Use the formulas from Pages 4-6 to calculate the annual impact of each pillar.

- **Pillar 1** Production Capacity
- **Pillar 2** Self-Service Scale
- **Pillar 3** Agency Spend

#2

## Add your investment

Include the one-time and ongoing investment required to implement your solution.

- Platform cost
- Implementation
- Training
- Other (optional)

#3

## Present the ROI

Use the results to calculate ROI and payback period, and built a clear case for investment.

- Annual savings
- Total investment
- ROI (Year 1)
- Payback period (months)



### Prefer to enter your numbers directly?

The CHILI GraFx ROI Calculator generates a personalized estimate with a downloadable report.

[Calculate your ROI](#)

# The ROI in action: Brand Global Ltd

Brand Global Ltd is a fictional global consumer goods brand: 20 in-house designers, 12 markets, four languages, \$800K annual agency spend.

## #1 Production Capacity

Annual value recovered

**\$513,000**

- 20 in-house designers
- 45% of time on adaptation work
- \$95,000 average fully-loaded annual salary

$$20 \text{ designers} \times 45\% \text{ time on adaptation work} \times \$95,000 \text{ annual salary} = \$855,000 \text{ annual production inefficiency}$$

GraFx Studio recovers 60% of adaptation time:

**\$513,000 in year 1 value**

## #2 Self-Service at Scale

Annual value recovered

**\$231,840**

- ~3,600 simple requests/year
- 2 hours per request
- \$46/hour fully-loaded designer cost

$$3,600 \text{ requests} \times 2 \text{ hours of work} \times \$46 \text{ per hour} = \$331,200 \text{ designer dependency cost}$$

GraFx Experience eliminates 70% of designer dependency:

**\$231,840 in year 1 value**

## #3 Agency Spend Reduction

Annual value recovered

**\$320,000**

- \$800,000 annual agency spend
- 40% is adaptation work
- GraFx Studio eliminates 100% in year 1

$$\$800,000 \text{ agency spend} \times 40\% \text{ adaptation work} = \$320,000 \text{ agency spend on adaptation work}$$

Eliminate agency spend on adaptation work:

**\$320,000 in year 1 value**

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

● Production capacity reclaimed	\$513,000
● Self-service scale	\$231,000
● Agency spend reduction	\$320,000

**TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFIT** **\$1,064,840**

Annual platform subscription*	\$120,000
Implementation & training (one-time)	\$25,000

**TOTAL YEAR 1 INVESTMENT** **\$145,000**

NET YEAR 1 BENEFIT

**\$919,840**

ROI (YEAR 1)

**634%**

PAYBACK PERIOD

**1.6 months**

Quantify the business impact of GraFx Studio + GraFx Experience on your global creative operations.

[Calculate your ROI](#)

\*Price depending on time size and production volume. [Check our pricing.](#)

# 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 transforms 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.

## See what CHILI GraFx could mean for your creative operation.

### 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 →](#)

### Trusted by global retail brands

