THE MARKETERS LENS:

WHAT MARKETERS REALLY THINK ABOUT CREATIVE AND AI

M+C SAATCHI

INTRODUCTION

We surveyed marketing professionals to get opinions from those managing three hot topics: Media Measurement, Commerce Media, and Creative AI.

This is the second installment, focusing specifically on Creative and the use of AI in developing Performance Creative.
The first chapter on Commerce Media is available here.

The respondents were primarily based in the U.S., but the findings will likely apply to other markets as universal subjects.

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SECTION 1 KEY CREATIVE AND AI TAKEAWAYS

Google (70%) remains the most dominant digital channel marketers are developing creative for, followed by Meta (47%), multi-purpose video (43%), multi-purpose display (31%), and Connected TV (20%)

Channel	%
Google	70%
Meta	47%
Multi-purpose Video	43%
Multi-purpose display	31%
Connected TV	20%
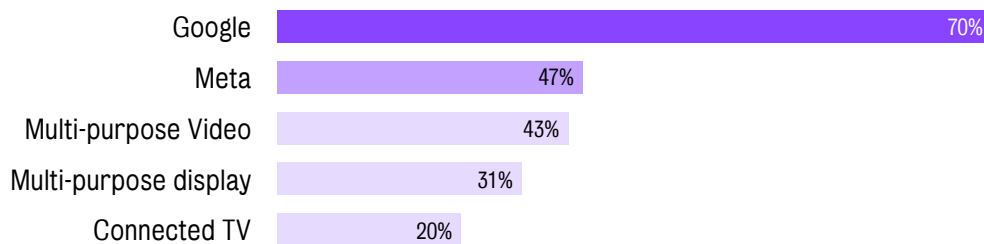
83%

A massive 83% of respondents feel there is room for improvement with their digital creatives, and the leading barrier cited was needing more budget to do so (62% of respondents)

" As one respondent said; "We have limited creative resources but we have begun utilizing AI to create a variety of content variations to keep up with the demands of advertising platforms." "

58%

leverage AI for creatives, with the leading use cases still being image-based (51%) and copywriting (47%). 1 in 5 are leveraging AI for various creative outputs, including video, voiceover, and animation.
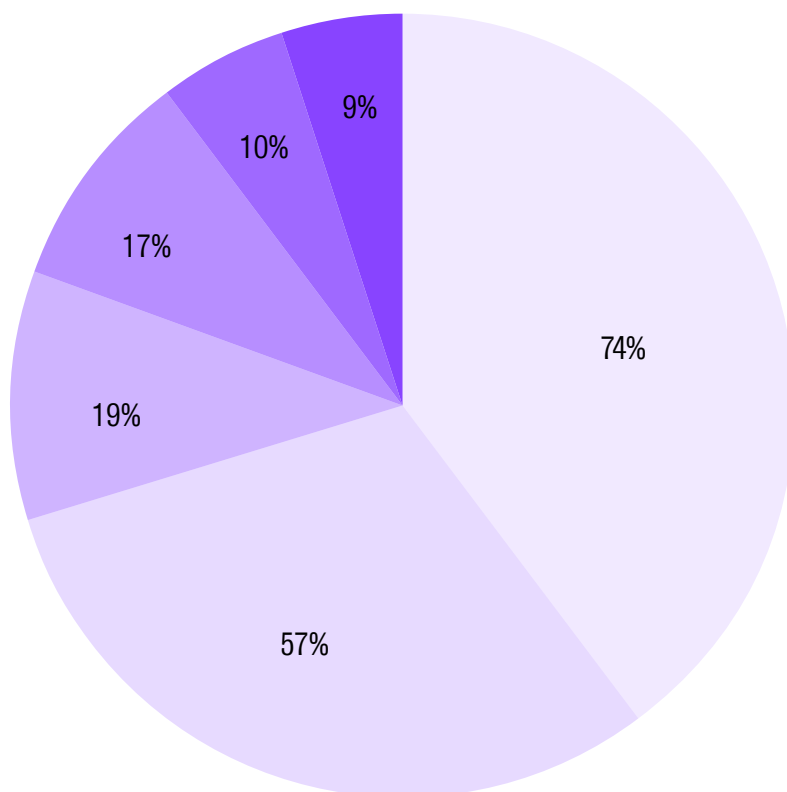
50%

of respondents have concerns about the use of AI in the creative process

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THE **MOST POPULAR** AI PLATFORMS FOR CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

- ChatGPT (74%)
- Canva (57%)
- Dall-E (19%)
- Midjourney (17%)
- Runway (10%)
- Elevenlabs (9%)

-While in-house creative generation is dominant (59%), 1 in 4 marketers use a hybrid model with 3rd party support & input.

51%

of respondents say they have concerns about using AI in the creative process.

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"We are in an era of balancing agility and scalability, content must be created faster, personalized at scale, and optimized for multiple platforms. AI is becoming essential to that equation, helping teams keep up with demand. However, while automation can enhance efficiency, the real challenge is ensuring creative remains impactful, brand-aligned, and strategically driven. The best results come when AI and human creativity work hand in hand."

ALLITA CRASTO
Global Head of Creative,
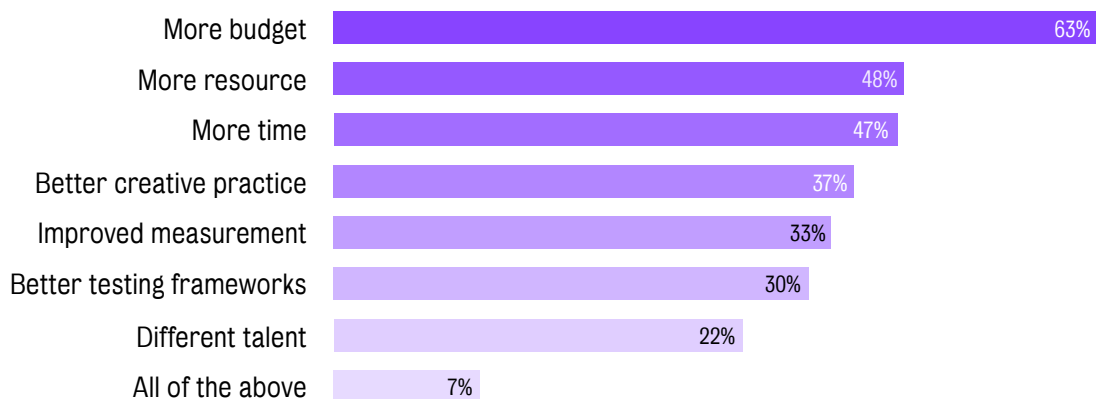M+C Saatchi Performance

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SECTION 2

DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE DATA

Creative could be improved with

More budget	63%
More resource	48%
More time	47%
Better creative practice	37%
Improved measurement	33%
Better testing frameworks	30%
Different talent	22%
All of the above	7%

Creative teams are time, budget, and resource-poor, which are all reasons advertisers turn to AI. As one respondent said; "We don't improve. We are extremely resource-constrained, so any creative work is good." Checks and balances must be in place to ensure quality is not compromised.

"It is interesting to see that 37% of respondents think a better understanding of creative best practices would improve creative. This highlights the need for bespoke tools such as our new Creative IQ platform, which enables computer vision AI and to generate a data-led view of what creative best practice looks like for each brand."

- Bobbie Gersbach, Global Planning Director, M+C Saatchi Performance
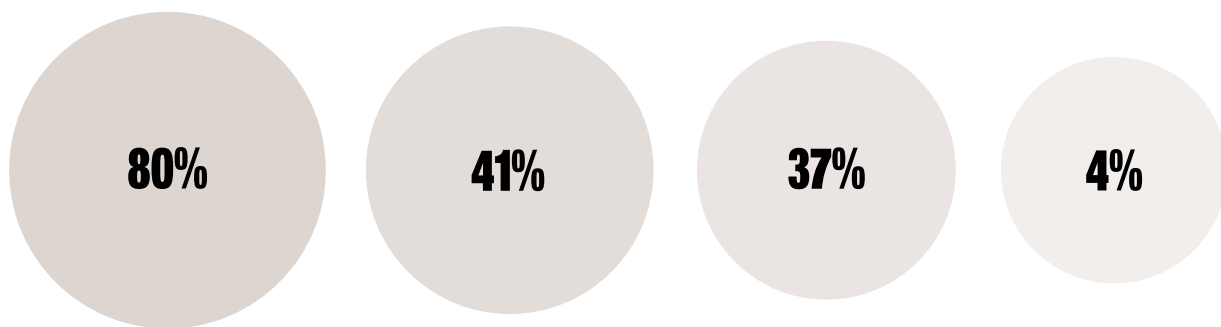
55.83% of respondents are using AI tools to generate or support creative development. 61% plan to use AI in the next 12 months.

This data shows the rapid adoption of AI tools. However, it is easy to become overwhelmed with the speed of change in the industry.

Currently, marketers are using, on average, two different Generative AI platforms, which means that no one platform offers the best output for all formats.

Advertisers must clearly understand their specific creative needs and map tools to ensure they approach the area strategically.

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80%

80% of respondents are using AI to refresh creatives daily or weekly

41%

41% use AI tools every week

37%

37% use AI tools every day,

4%

Only 4% of respondents rarely use AI tools to develop creative.

Gone are the days of 6-weekly or quarterly refreshes to stay competitive, and these numbers will only grow as tools become more advanced.

Creative teams must stay on top of development or risk falling behind and losing their competitive advantage.

However, they must have experienced advice or resources to advise when selecting tools.

ChatGPT (37.97%) and Canva (28.2%) are by far the most widely used for AI content development

Both of these tools are at the cutting edge of Creative AI development. They offer clear benefits in delivering efficiency and speed to marketers and creative teams.

Other developments include the successful ingestion of DALL-E into ChatGPT, which means users can now generate and manipulate images within the ChatGPT interface, lean into text-to-image generation, and edit and enhance images directly within ChatGPT.
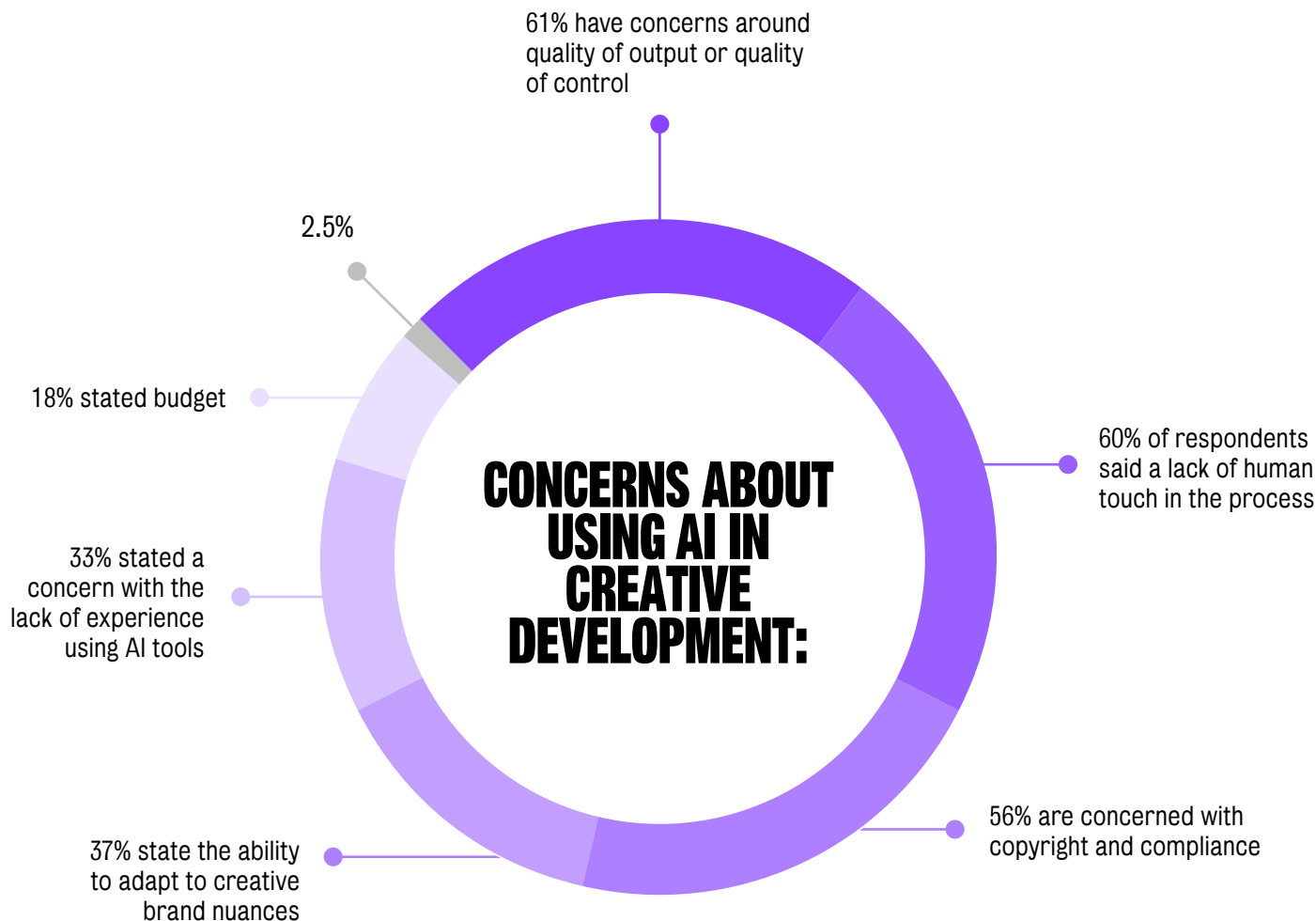
50.83% of respondents say they have concerns about using AI in the creative process

"These concerns are justified and are one of the reasons why our creative team believes in a 'AI-driven, human-curated' approach. It is essential for each brand to assess how AI can fit into their business plan carefully, not all AI tools will be the right approach for all businesses."

- Allita Crasto, Global Head of Creative, M+C Saatchi Performance

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61% have concerns around quality of output or quality of control

2.5%

18% stated budget

33% stated a concern with the lack of experience using AI tools

37% state the ability to adapt to creative brand nuances

CONCERNS ABOUT USING AI IN CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

60% of respondents said a lack of human touch in the process

56% are concerned with copyright and compliance

"This data shows exactly why 'AI-driven, human curated' is so important. Advertisers will always need a creative person to oversee the interaction with an AI tool or platform, add intelligence through nuance, review for emotion and ensure the output aligns with the brand's needs. As the industry shifts more and more towards AI, it's essential not just to be curious about AI-driven platforms, but to adapt them into our routine."

- Allita Crasto, Global Head of Creative, M+C Saatchi Performance

"It is fascinating to see that copyright & compliance are almost as big a concern as creative quality. Brands have to find new and more agile internal processes for legal vetting and approval of a higher and more frequent creative volume. The leaders here are project management platforms that have integrated early and effectively with Gen AI platforms, such as Monday.com, Asana, Jira, etc."

- Bobbie Gersbach, Global Planning Director, M+C Saatchi Performance

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SECTION 3

WHAT DOES THIS SURVEY TELL US ABOUT PERFORMANCE CREATIVE AND AI?

AI in the creative process is here to stay

55.83% of those surveyed use AI tools to generate or support creative development, and only 3.73% of respondents rarely use AI tools to develop creatives, with 37.31% saying they use AI tools every day and 41% stating they use AI tools every week.

The reasons are evident from the answers to "Why is AI being used to develop creatives?"

WHY IS AI BEING USED TO DEVELOP CREATIVES

Efficiency	25%
Speed	23%
Cost saving	20%
Lack of resource	10%
All of the above	23%
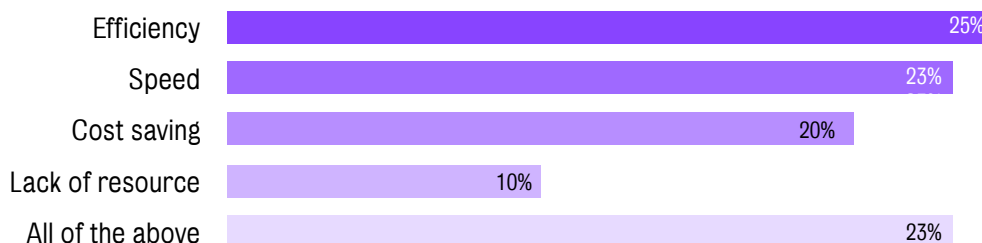
% of answers to the question; 'Why is AI being used to develop creatives'

"

"AI in creative development is no longer a 'nice-to-have' - it's an essential tool. The ability to scale content, personalize messaging, and adapt to platform demands drives its adoption. But the best results come when AI is used as an enabler, not a replacement for human creativity."
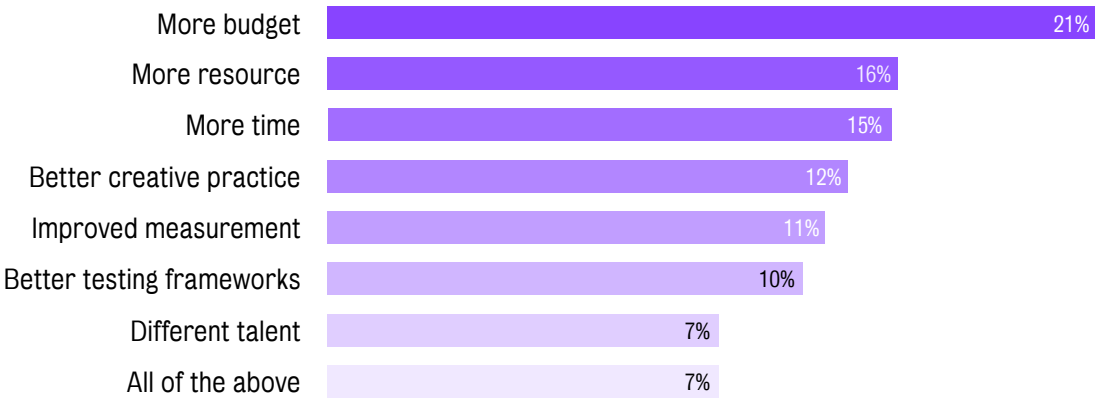
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Global Head of Creative,
M+C Saatchi Performance

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Creative teams still seek improvement and optimization

Many creative teams are turning to AI for the reasons above and because they feel there is room to improve and optimize their creatives. 83% of respondents think there is room for improvement with their digital creatives. When asked what would enable creatives to be improved, the answers were split across a variety of reasons eg.

Category	%
More budget	21%
More resource	16%
More time	15%
Better creative practice	12%
Improved measurement	11%
Better testing frameworks	10%
Different talent	7%
All of the above	7%

% of answers to the question; 'What would enable these creatives to be improved.'

Therefore, a typical response is to turn to AI to enable teams to speed up the creative process while feeling under-resourced.

> "Creative teams are under constant pressure to do more with less. More content, more formats, and more performance, often with fewer resources. AI helps bridge the gap, making ideation and execution faster. But the real opportunity is using AI to enhance, not replace, the creative process, ensuring campaigns stay impactful and brand-aligned."
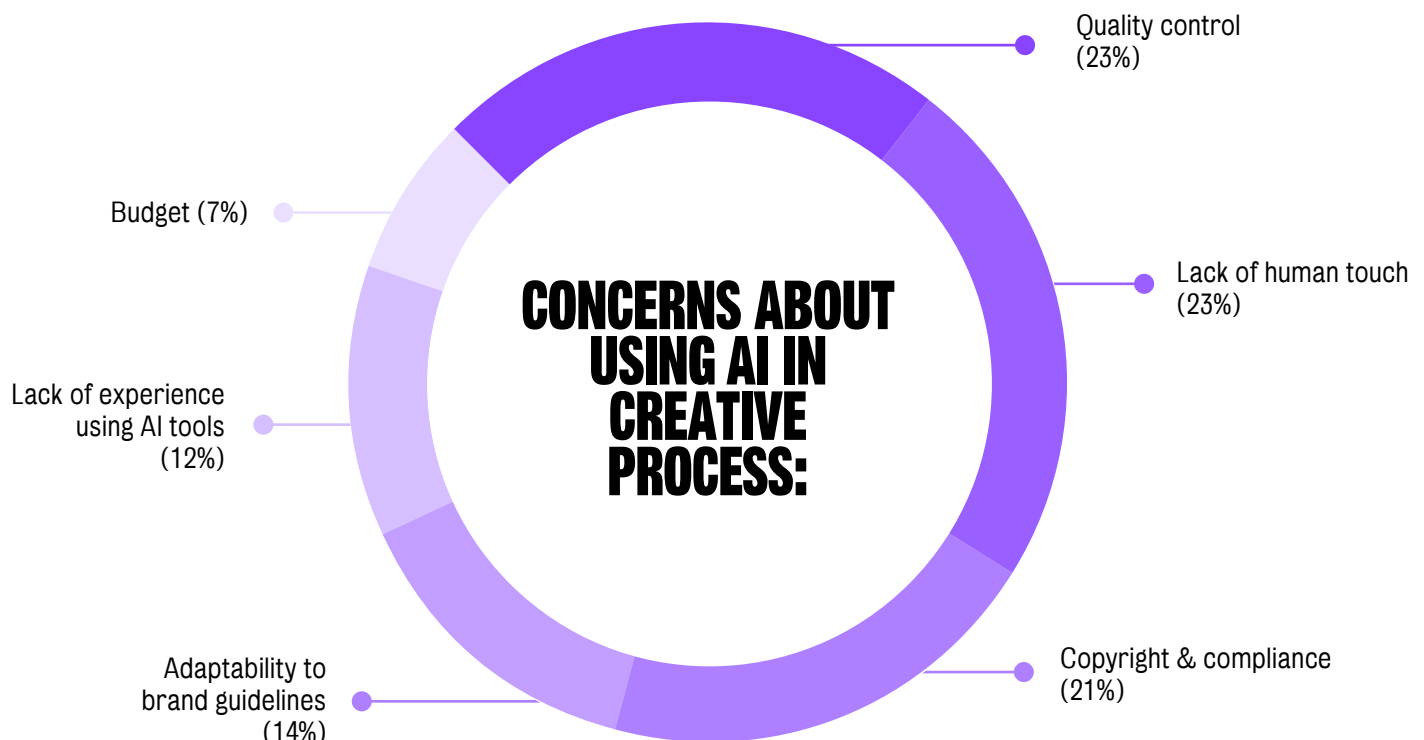
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M+C Saatchi Performance

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There are concerns about the use of AI in the creative process

However, just because most creative teams are using AI doesn't mean there are no concerns that these platforms are becoming increasingly widespread. 50.83% of respondents stated concerns about using AI in the creative process, which were felt across a range of areas:

CONCERNS ABOUT USING AI IN CREATIVE PROCESS:

- Quality control (23%)
- Lack of human touch (23%)
- Copyright & compliance (21%)
- Adaptability to brand guidelines (14%)
- Lack of experience using AI tools (12%)
- Budget (7%)

> "These concerns are genuine, which is why an approach of 'AI-driven, human-curated' can be helpful. Most brands have strong brand guidelines to adhere to and that is why human oversight is crucial to get the right balance between minds and machines."

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M+C Saatchi Performance

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IN SUMMARY

"The role of Creative in performance marketing is evolving rapidly. Marketers are embracing AI to scale content, but the challenge remains—how do we balance efficiency with impact? The key is not just generating more, but generating better. AI can support the process, but strategic creativity remains the differentiator."

ALLITA CRASTO

Global Head of Creative,
M+C Saatchi Performance

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MEET THE TEAM

ALLITA CRASTO
Global Head of Creative,
M+C Saatchi Performance

Allita Crasto is the Global Head of Creative at M+C Saatchi Performance, where she's spent the last 4 years building and leading a global team of designers and writers. With over a decade of experience across advertising, digital, social, and performance marketing, she currently drives creative for brands like Canva, Amazon, Soundcloud, Tinker DIY, and A23. In the past, she's worked on campaigns for Netflix, Spotify, Marico, and Prime Video, crafting impactful ideas across formats and markets.

BOBBIE GERSBACH
Global Planning Director,
M+C Saatchi Performance

Bobbie Gersbach has spent the past 17 years working in digital media with network agencies including Publicis and Dentsu before joining M+C Saatchi Performance in 2015. As one of the first employees of M+C Saatchi Performance in the APAC region, Bobbie has been key to the growth of the agency and its clients, particularly regarding Amazon and Grab. She pioneered mobile marketing, strategic growth planning and privacy-centric measurement. In 2023 Bobbie was promoted to Global Planning Director and is now responsible for managing the agency's Global Strategy & Insights team and leading the Australia & New Zealand business.

Interested in understanding how Performance Creative can benefit your business? Contact us to find out more about our Creative solutions or meet Allita's team.

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ABOUT M+C SAATCHI PERFORMANCE

M+C Saatchi Performance is a leading global performance marketing agency, we are the growth agency for digitally driven brands. We started in 2006 with a focus on mobile. Since then we have expanded to provide profitable growth across digital channels, leveraging the reach of paid search & social, programmatic, retail media, CTV, influencer marketing, ASO, creative, measurement solutions and more.

If you would like to find out more about our data-driven visual AI creative tool Creative IQ, or find out how we develop winning Performance Creative campaigns for our clients, don't hesitate to reach out:

CONTACT US

🌐 www.mcsaatchiperformance.com

📷 instagram.com/mcsaatchiperformance

in linkedln.com/company/m-c-saatchi-performance

𝕏 x.com/mcsaatchiperf

Source: A survey was conducted of 240 marketing professionals via Pollfish between December 2024 and January 2025.

Respondents who work in marketing in the US (235/240 completes):
-    Slight female skew (57%)
-    55% of respondents said they were responsible for marketing strategy and planning or selecting marketing technologies and tools.
-    The top states were California (13%), followed by Texas, New York, New Jersey, Illinois & Florida (7% each)
-    69% employed fulltime, 18% self-employed, 9% employed part-time
-    1 in 3 have a global remit (outside of the Americas)

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