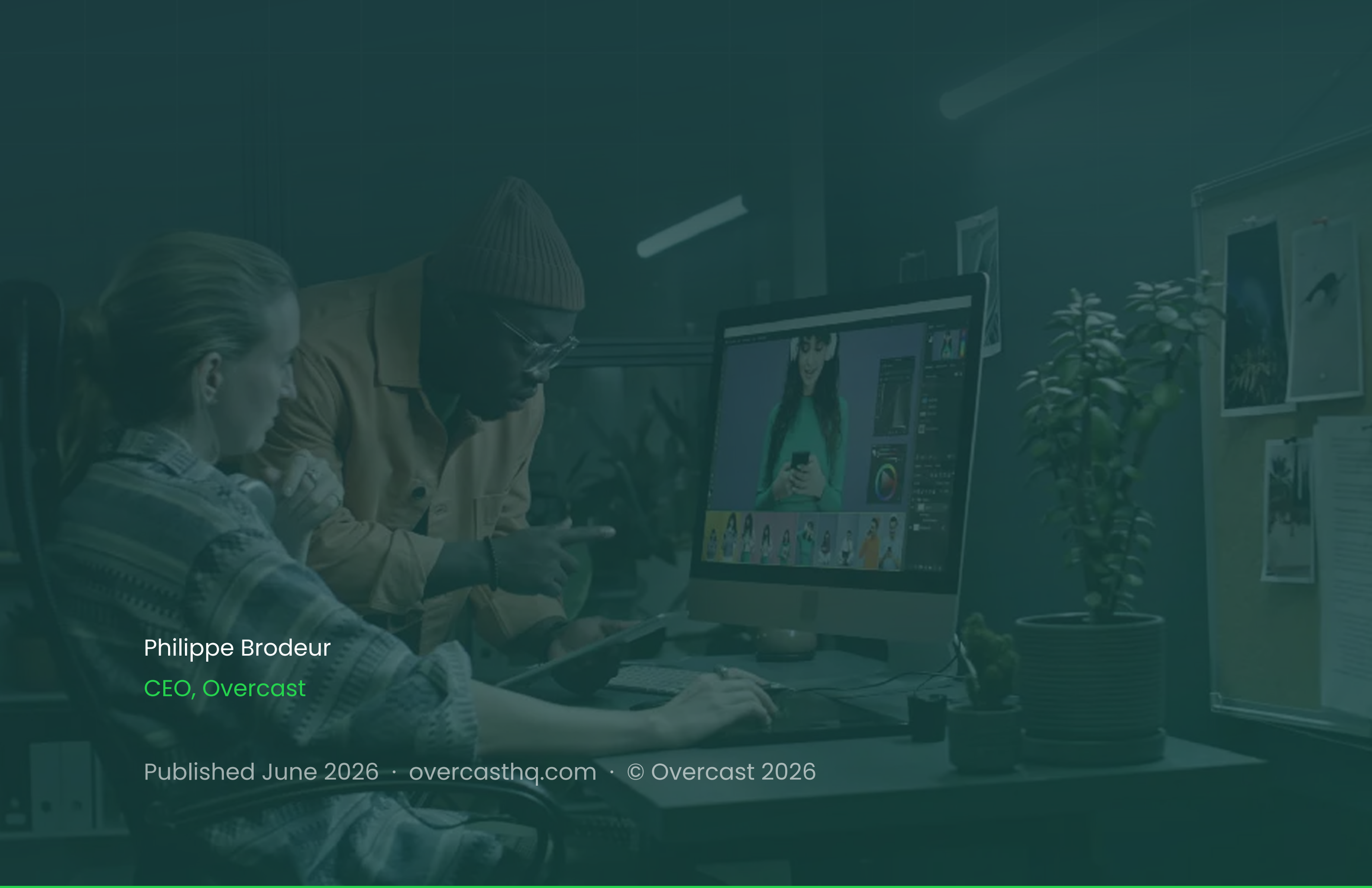
Content Has Changed.
DAM Must Respond.

How DAM leaders can create greater value from content

Perspectives on governance, readiness, content intelligence
and the changing role of DAM in the enterprise.



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CEO Foreword

Digital Asset Management is an essential capability for organisations navigating increasingly complex content environments. DAM leaders have spent years establishing governance, improving discoverability and creating the trust required for content to move effectively across the enterprise.

That work has delivered enormous value.

The conversations taking place today however, are different from those of even a few years ago.

DAM leaders are increasingly being asked questions that extend beyond repositories and metadata. How do we maximise the value of the content we already possess? How do we improve responsiveness without compromising control? How do we support emerging priorities such as AI, retail media and increasingly sophisticated video ecosystems? How do we demonstrate the broader contribution DAM makes to organisational performance?

These questions do not diminish the importance of DAM. If anything, they reinforce it.

Throughout 2026, we have had the privilege of speaking with customers, partners and industry leaders navigating these challenges firsthand. Similar themes have emerged repeatedly. Organisations are under pressure to do more with existing investments, while expectations around speed, agility and business impact continue to rise.

This report has been developed in response to those conversations.

It is not intended to provide definitive answers or prescribe a single approach (although it might!) Every organisation operates within its own context, balancing different priorities and ambitions. Instead, our hope is that it provides useful perspectives, encourages reflection and offers reassurance that many of the challenges facing today's DAM leaders are widely shared across the industry.

The foundations you have built matter. The trust you have established matters. The confidence you have created matters.
The next chapter of DAM will not be written from scratch. It will be built upon the work already underway within organisations like yours.

I hope this report sparks valuable conversations and helps you recognise the important role DAM continues to play in enabling trusted content to deliver meaningful business outcomes.

Philippe Brodeur
CEO, Overcast

About This Report

Digital Asset Management is changing.

The foundations of successful DAM programmes remain as important as ever. Governance, discoverability and trust continue to underpin how organisations manage increasingly complex content ecosystems. Yet the questions being asked of DAM leaders are expanding.

How do we maximise the value of the content we already possess? How do we improve responsiveness without compromising control? How do we demonstrate the contribution DAM makes to broader organisational objectives?

This report reflects conversations taking place across the DAM community in 2026. It draws upon Overcast's experience supporting enterprise content operations, insights shared by customers and partners, and observations from industry events including DAM Europe.

Its purpose is not to prescribe a single approach or suggest that every organisation should follow the same path. Rather, it is intended to encourage reflection on the opportunities and challenges shaping the next chapter of DAM, and to explore how trusted content can deliver greater organisational value.

01

DAM Europe 2026: What the Industry Is Talking About

From Asset Management to Organisational Impact

Reviewing the agenda for DAM Europe 2026 reveals an interesting shift in the conversations taking place across the industry.

For many years, discussions surrounding DAM focused primarily on the mechanics of asset management. Governance frameworks, metadata standards, taxonomy design and user adoption dominated conference programmes and internal transformation initiatives alike. These foundations remain critically important and continue to underpin successful DAM programmes across every sector.

However, the themes emerging from this year's event suggest that the expectations placed upon DAM are expanding.

Across two days of presentations, workshops and panel discussions, the emphasis extends well beyond repositories and record-keeping. Organisations are increasingly exploring how DAM supports enterprise AI initiatives, how governance frameworks can coexist with greater agility, and how content ecosystems can be designed to improve the movement of assets across increasingly complex operating environments.

The Conversations Taking Centre Stage

The agenda itself reflects this shift.

Sessions examine how organisations are establishing trust in AI, building foundations for scalable success, improving content mobility through automation, embedding DAM into day-to-day operations and creating ecosystems capable of supporting more intelligent decision-making. Speakers from global organisations including Mars, Nestlé, HSBC, Vinted, Twinings, GSK, WWF and BBC Studios are not simply discussing how to manage content more effectively. They are exploring how content contributes to broader organisational objectives and what conditions are required to maximise its value.

Equally significant is the growing prominence of themes that have historically sat adjacent to DAM.

Rights management and compliance continue to feature heavily. Change management emerges repeatedly as a critical success factor. Discussions around integration, authenticity, trust and governance increasingly focus on enabling confidence rather than enforcing control. Sessions dedicated to agentic AI, intelligent ecosystems and enterprise-wide capabilities reinforce the idea that content no longer exists in isolation from wider operational and commercial considerations.

The Foundations Still Matter

Taken together, these conversations suggest that the industry is entering a new phase of maturity.

The repository remains important, but it is increasingly viewed as one component within a broader content ecosystem. Organisations are seeking to understand not only how content can be governed, but how it can be activated more effectively. The conversation is shifting from storage towards utilisation, from administration towards orchestration, and from operational efficiency towards business impact.

This does not diminish the importance of DAM fundamentals.

If anything, it reinforces them.

Governance, trust and discoverability remain the foundations upon which more sophisticated capabilities depend. Without them, organisations struggle to establish confidence in the content they create and distribute. Yet these foundations are increasingly expected to support a broader set of ambitions, including improved agility, stronger reuse, faster campaign activation and greater return on content investment.

A Broader Opportunity for DAM Leaders

Perhaps the most important observation is that the DAM community itself appears to recognise this transition.

The questions being asked are changing.

The language is evolving.

And the role of DAM within the enterprise is being redefined accordingly.

Whether organisations describe this shift through the lenses of Content Operations, Campaign Readiness, Content Intelligence or enterprise AI, the underlying objective remains remarkably consistent: ensuring that content can move through the organisation with greater confidence, greater efficiency and greater impact.

For DAM leaders, this represents both a challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge lies in balancing increasingly complex demands without compromising the governance principles upon which successful programmes have been built.

The opportunity lies in demonstrating that those same principles have a much broader contribution to make than many organisations have historically recognised.

The future of DAM may not be defined by the size of the repository or the sophistication of the taxonomy alone.

It may instead be defined by the extent to which DAM enables organisations to extract greater value from the content they already possess.

FW1

Framework 1: The DAM Leadership Shift

Throughout this report, we will see how the expectations placed upon DAM leaders are expanding. The foundations of successful DAM programmes remain critically important, but increasingly they are expected to support broader organisational objectives related to agility, utilisation and business impact.

This shift does not require DAM leaders to abandon traditional priorities. Rather, it reflects an expansion in how those priorities are understood and communicated across the enterprise.

The organisations deriving the greatest value from DAM are not necessarily changing what they do. More often, they are expanding why they do it. Governance enables confidence. Confidence enables action. Action enables outcomes that matter more broadly across the business.

The challenge for today's DAM leaders is not to reinvent the foundations they have built, but to ensure those foundations continue to support the increasingly strategic role content plays within their organisations.

02

Exec Summary: Content Has Changed. DAM Must Respond.

DAM Has Never Been More Important

It has also never been under more pressure.

Over the last decade, DAM teams have helped bring order to increasingly complex content ecosystems. They have established governance frameworks, improved metadata standards, increased content discoverability and provided organisations with greater confidence in the assets they create and distribute. For many enterprises, DAM has become foundational infrastructure.

Those achievements matter.

The challenge is that the environment DAM now operates within has changed significantly.

Content Has Become More Complex

Video has become the dominant format across marketing, retail media, sponsorship, social and customer engagement. Campaign timelines have shortened. Distribution channels have multiplied. The volume of content moving through organisations has increased dramatically. Expectations around personalisation and localisation continue to rise. At the same time, rights management, compliance requirements and stakeholder complexity have introduced additional layers of operational friction.

The result is that many organisations find themselves in an uncomfortable position.

They are creating more content than ever before, yet campaigns still launch later than expected. They have extensive content libraries, yet teams continue to commission new assets because existing material cannot be found, trusted or adapted quickly enough. They invest heavily in production, but often struggle to maximise the value generated from the content they already own.

These are not necessarily failures of technology.

Nor are they failures of the DAM teams responsible for managing it.

Rather, they reflect a shift in what organisations increasingly require from their content operations.

From Control to Contribution

Historically, DAM was measured by its ability to provide control. Could assets be governed effectively? Could teams find approved content? Could organisations reduce duplication and improve consistency?

Those questions remain important.

Increasingly, however, senior leaders are asking different ones.

How quickly can campaigns move from approval to activation? How effectively are we reusing existing content? Where are our operational bottlenecks? How much value are we losing through delays, duplication and underutilisation? Are we measuring content adoption, or content impact?

These questions sit at the intersection of content, operations and commercial performance.

They are also reshaping the conversation around DAM.

The most effective DAM teams are not abandoning the principles that brought them success. Governance, trust, structure and discoverability remain essential. Instead, they are building upon those foundations to address a broader challenge: ensuring that content moves efficiently through the organisation and generates the outcomes it was created to achieve.

This report explores that shift.

It examines why traditional approaches to content management are coming under strain, how operational friction contributes to hidden forms of waste, and why concepts such as Campaign Readiness and Content Intelligence are gaining prominence within enterprise environments.

Most importantly, it considers what these changes mean for DAM leaders themselves.

Because this is not simply a story about technology. It is a story about value.

Building Upon Strong Foundations

The organisations that succeed in the years ahead are unlikely to be those that create the largest volumes of content. They will be those that can extract the greatest value from the content they already possess. They will know where their assets are, understand how and where those assets can be used, and ensure they are ready to support the moments that matter most to the business.

DAM has an important role to play in that future.

But it may require leaders to think differently about how success is measured.

Not only by the quality of governance. not only by the strength of metadata.

But by the extent to which content contributes to speed, efficiency and commercial outcomes across the organisation.

The opportunity is significant. The foundations have already been built.

The question now is what organisations choose to build upon them.

02

Why DAM Is No Longer Enough

DAM Solved Important Problems

For many organisations, DAM has been one of the great success stories of enterprise marketing technology.

It brought order to increasingly chaotic content ecosystems. It established governance where none existed. It gave teams confidence that approved assets could be found, trusted and distributed appropriately. It reduced duplication, improved consistency and helped organisations take control of rapidly growing content estates.

Those outcomes remain valuable and in many respects, they have become essential.

The challenge is that the environment DAM now operates within has changed significantly.

A decade ago, many DAM programmes focused primarily on images, documents and a relatively contained set of marketing assets. Distribution channels were more limited. Content volumes were lower. Approval processes, while often frustrating, were generally easier to navigate.

Today's reality looks very different.

Video has become the dominant medium across marketing, retail media, sponsorship, ecommerce and customer engagement. Campaigns are expected to launch across multiple channels simultaneously. Assets are localised for regional markets, adapted for platform-specific requirements and repurposed continuously throughout their lifecycle. The pace of execution has accelerated, while the complexity involved in delivering campaigns has increased substantially.

DAM Solved Important Problems

Senior DAM leaders often find themselves in a difficult position.

They have spent years building the foundations that modern content operations depend upon. They have developed governance frameworks, improved metadata quality, driven adoption programmes and created order where previously there was fragmentation and inconsistency. In many organisations, they have been responsible for transforming DAM from a departmental tool into a trusted enterprise capability.

They have delivered genuine value.

Yet many are now being asked questions they were not being asked five years ago.

- Why are campaigns still taking so long to launch?
- Why are regional teams recreating assets that already exist?
- Why is content reuse lower than expected?
- Why are we producing more content while struggling to generate proportionally more value?
- Why do approvals continue to create friction?
- How do we support increasingly complex ecosystems involving Retail Media, CTV,
- social platforms and local market variations?
- What role should AI play within our content operations?

And perhaps most challenging of all, how do we justify further investment when leadership expects existing systems to do more?

These are not DAM questions in the traditional sense.

They are content operations questions.

The distinction matters because it helps explain why many DAM teams feel increasing pressure despite having delivered against the objectives originally set for them. The goalposts have moved.

Organisations no longer expect DAM teams simply to govern content effectively.

Increasingly, they expect them to help content move efficiently through the business and contribute more directly to commercial outcomes.

That expectation brings both opportunity and complexity.

Because while the problems have changed, the foundations required to address them remain deeply connected to the capabilities DAM teams have spent years building.

The Challenge Is No Longer Storage

Historically, DAM programmes were judged by their ability to answer a relatively straightforward question:

“Can people find and use approved content?”

Increasingly, however, organisations need to answer a different one:

"Can approved content move efficiently through the business and support commercial outcomes?"

The distinction is subtle, but important.

Findability remains essential. Governance remains essential. Metadata remains essential.

But they are increasingly becoming the foundations upon which broader operational capabilities are built.

A campaign cannot move faster simply because an asset has been located.

It also needs confidence around rights. It needs technical validation. It may require localisation, market-specific approvals or adaptation for different platforms. Teams need visibility into whether content is truly ready to activate rather than simply approved to exist.

When Good Foundations Are No Longer Sufficient

This is where many organisations experience friction.

The content is present.

The operational readiness is not.

As a result, assets often accumulate delays after they have been approved. Stakeholders wait for additional sign-off. Technical issues emerge late in the process. Regional teams commission new versions rather than adapting existing ones. Valuable content remains trapped within libraries because the effort required to operationalise it outweighs the perceived benefit of reuse.

These challenges create costs that are rarely measured directly.

Campaigns lose momentum. Production budgets absorb unnecessary duplication. Marketing teams become dependent on manual coordination to maintain progress. Opportunities to maximise the value of existing content are missed.

The issue is not one of asset management.

It is one of content movement.

The Opportunity for DAM Leaders

This is why the conversation surrounding DAM is beginning to broaden.

Organisations are becoming increasingly interested in concepts such as Campaign Readiness, Content Intelligence and operational efficiency, not because DAM is becoming less important, but because the foundations DAM provides are no longer sufficient on their own.

The expectation has shifted.

Content is no longer simply an asset to be stored and governed.

It has become part of a commercial process.

It must move.

It must adapt.

It must support increasingly complex activation requirements.

And increasingly, it is being measured by the outcomes it helps the organisation achieve.

This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for DAM leaders.

The challenge lies in recognising that governance alone may no longer justify investment.

The opportunity lies in building upon the strengths DAM already provides to support a broader set of organisational objectives.

Building Upon Strong Foundations

Because the organisations that succeed in the years ahead are unlikely to be those with the largest content libraries.

They will be those that can transform those libraries into sources of operational advantage.

The foundations already exist.

But we need to ask 'how are they used?'

04

Where Content Investments Lose Value

The most expensive content in the organisation is often the content that fails to deliver the value it was expected to create.

That statement may seem counterintuitive at first. After all, most enterprises invest heavily in ensuring that content programmes are well managed. Production budgets are carefully scrutinised. Agency relationships are closely governed. Media spend is tracked with increasing sophistication. Campaign performance is measured through dashboards, attribution models and executive reporting.

Yet while organisations have become highly effective at measuring investment, many remain surprisingly poor at measuring value realisation.

Specifically, they struggle to understand how much value is lost after content has already been created.

There is no line item in the quarterly report labelled “missed opportunities”. No dashboard tracking the cost of delayed activation. No widely accepted measure of how much production expenditure could have been avoided through more effective reuse. Few organisations can confidently quantify the value sitting dormant within their content libraries.

As a result, one of the largest sources of inefficiency in modern marketing often remains hidden in plain sight.

This is not simply a question of content waste.

It is a question of unrealised return.

For senior DAM leaders, this distinction matters. The conversation is no longer just about whether content is governed appropriately or whether teams can locate approved assets. Increasingly, it is about whether organisations are extracting the maximum possible value from the investments they have already made.

Because while content production has become increasingly sophisticated, content utilisation has often struggled to keep pace.

Many organisations continue to create more while achieving proportionally less.

The Difference Between Content Volume and Content Value

For years, content maturity has been associated with scale.

More campaigns. More channels. More localisation. More assets. More video.

These metrics have become familiar indicators of activity and, in some cases, success.

The challenge is that activity does not necessarily translate into value.

An organisation may produce thousands of assets each year while still relying heavily on manual coordination to launch campaigns. It may have extensive video archives yet continue commissioning new content because existing material cannot be discovered quickly enough or trusted with sufficient confidence. It may successfully increase production volumes while simultaneously reducing the return generated from each asset created.

In this environment, volume becomes an increasingly imperfect measure of effectiveness.

A more useful question may be this:

How much value is the organisation extracting from the content it already owns?

That question shifts the conversation significantly.

Instead of focusing exclusively on production outputs, leaders begin considering utilisation. How often are assets reused? How quickly can approved content be activated? How much value continues to be generated after the initial campaign has concluded? How effectively can existing material support new business priorities?

These questions are harder to answer.

They are also considerably more important.

Because they move the discussion from content creation towards content performance.

From volume towards yield.

Where Value Begins to Leak Away

One of the reasons this issue receives relatively little attention is that value rarely disappears all at once.

More often, it leaks gradually throughout the content lifecycle.

A regional team recreates content because adapting existing assets feels too complex. A campaign launches later than planned because approvals remain unresolved. Valuable archive footage remains unused because confidence in its rights status is limited. Teams invest time coordinating manual processes that could potentially have been addressed earlier.

Individually, these moments may seem relatively minor.

Collectively, they can become significant.

The consequences extend beyond operational inconvenience.

Campaigns lose momentum.

Marketing teams spend time managing complexity rather than focusing on growth initiatives.

Production budgets absorb unnecessary duplication.

Media investments become less productive because the strongest creative assets are not always ready when required.

The organisation becomes increasingly dependent on heroic effort to maintain execution.

This is not a criticism of the teams involved.

In many cases, people are working exceptionally hard to overcome operational challenges that were never fully designed into existing processes.

The issue is that complexity has increased faster than many content operating models have evolved to accommodate it.

As a result, organisations often compensate through additional effort rather than systemic improvement.

That approach can work for a period of time.

It becomes increasingly difficult to sustain at scale.

Why This Matters Beyond Marketing

It can be tempting to view these challenges as internal marketing concerns.

In reality, their impact often extends much further.

For CMOs, the issue is one of return on investment. Content production represents a substantial and growing commitment. If organisations cannot maximise the value generated from those investments, overall marketing efficiency inevitably declines.

For CFOs, the implications are equally important. Duplicate production, delayed campaigns and underutilised assets all contribute to forms of expenditure that are difficult to identify but nevertheless affect organisational performance. The objective is not simply to reduce costs. It is to ensure that existing investments continue delivering value over time.

For enterprise leadership teams, content increasingly represents an operational capability rather than a marketing output. Organisations compete on their ability to move quickly, adapt effectively and respond to changing market conditions. Content that remains trapped within fragmented workflows limits that agility.

This is particularly true within environments where video plays a central role.

Retail Media initiatives depend upon campaign readiness. Sponsorship activations rely upon speed. Regional markets require adaptability. Emerging channels introduce new technical requirements and approval considerations.

Under these conditions, the ability to activate content efficiently becomes a competitive advantage.

The ability to extract more value from existing content becomes a strategic capability.

The Opportunity Hidden Within Existing Investments

Despite the challenges involved, there is also reason for optimism.

Most organisations already possess the raw materials required to improve.

They have extensive content libraries. They have governance frameworks. They have metadata standards, approval processes and established DAM programmes. They have talented teams with deep institutional knowledge.

The opportunity lies not in replacing these foundations.

It lies in building upon them.

Improving discoverability increases confidence in reuse.

Strengthening governance improves trust.

Creating greater visibility into approval status reduces uncertainty.

Establishing clearer operational pathways accelerates activation.

Taken together, these improvements enable organisations to generate greater value from investments that have already been made.

This represents a meaningful shift in emphasis.

Historically, DAM programmes have often focused on creating order.

Increasingly, they have an opportunity to contribute to outcomes.

Faster campaigns.

Improved utilisation.

Greater efficiency.

Stronger return on content investment.

These are not objectives that sit outside the scope of DAM.

They are natural extensions of the capabilities DAM teams have spent years developing.

The difference lies in how success is measured.

From Content Cost to Content Yield

For many years, organisations have treated content primarily as a cost centre.

Budgets were allocated to production. Assets were delivered. Campaigns were executed. The focus remained on controlling expenditure while maintaining output.

There is growing evidence that a different perspective may be more useful.

Content can also be understood as an asset base capable of generating ongoing value.

Under this model, the objective shifts.

The question is no longer:

"How much content can we afford to create?"

Instead, it becomes:

"How much value can we continue extracting from the content we already possess?"

That change in perspective encourages different behaviours.

Reuse becomes a strategic objective rather than an operational convenience.

Activation speed becomes a commercial priority rather than a workflow consideration.

Operational friction becomes something to address proactively rather than simply manage reactively.

Perhaps most importantly, DAM programmes become increasingly connected to business outcomes.

Because ultimately, organisations do not invest in content simply to store it.

They invest in content because they expect it to support growth, strengthen customer engagement and improve commercial performance.

The organisations that succeed in the years ahead are unlikely to be those producing the largest quantity of content.

They will be those capable of generating the greatest return from the content they already own.

Value is the New Measure That Matters

The hidden cost within modern content operations is not necessarily inefficiency.

It is unrealised potential.

Content that remains unused. Campaigns that launch later than intended. Valuable assets that fail to contribute fully to business objectives. Small moments of friction that gradually accumulate into meaningful commercial consequences.

These forms of value leakage rarely receive the same level of attention as media investment or production expenditure.

Increasingly, they deserve it.

Because as content volumes continue to grow, organisations face a choice.

They can continue focusing primarily on producing more.

Or they can focus on extracting greater value from what already exists.

For DAM leaders, that choice represents an opportunity.

The foundations they have spent years building were never simply about storage.

They were about creating trust.

Creating confidence.

Creating order.

The next challenge is to ensure those foundations also support utilisation, activation and measurable business outcomes.

Not because governance matters less than it once did.

But because the value of governance is ultimately realised through the outcomes it enables.

Content that moves.

Content that performs.

Content that continues creating value long after the moment it was first approved. That may prove to be one of the most important contributions DAM teams make in the years ahead.

Industry Perspective:

> “
> *Overcast is especially useful when accessing older projects to make new edits. The whole process can now be completed by one person*
> **Juho Kahilainen Content Team Lead, SOK**

04

From Content Libraries to Content Intelligence

When Success Creates New Challenges

One of the unintended consequences of successful DAM programmes is that organisations often become victims of their own progress.

Over the past decade, DAM leaders have helped enterprises bring structure to increasingly complex content environments. They have developed governance frameworks, improved metadata standards, driven adoption initiatives and established confidence in assets that were once fragmented across teams, systems and geographies. These efforts have delivered genuine value. They have reduced duplication, strengthened brand consistency and enabled organisations to treat content as something more strategic than a collection of files stored in disconnected repositories.

Yet success has introduced a new challenge.

As organisations become more capable of creating and governing content, they inevitably produce more of it. New campaigns generate new assets. Regional teams require localised adaptations. Additional channels demand new formats and specifications. Over time, content estates expand, often dramatically. What began as an exercise in establishing control gradually becomes something else entirely.

The challenge is no longer scarcity.

It is abundance.

For many organisations, the question is no longer whether content exists. The question is whether they understand how to derive ongoing value from what they already possess. Which assets continue to have relevance beyond their original purpose? Where does untapped value exist within the archive? Which investments should be extended, adapted and reused, and which genuinely require net-new production?

These are difficult questions because they move beyond the traditional remit of Digital Asset Management. Historically, DAM programmes have focused on creating trust and order within increasingly chaotic environments. Their success has often been measured through improvements in governance, discoverability and adoption. These outcomes remain critically important. Metadata quality still matters. Taxonomy design still matters.

Permissions frameworks and governance policies remain essential foundations within enterprise content ecosystems.

However, those foundations are increasingly being asked to support broader organisational ambitions.

From Control to Contribution

Marketing leaders want to improve campaign velocity without sacrificing quality or increasing operational risk. Regional teams need the flexibility to respond to local market requirements without compromising global consistency. Production functions face continual pressure to deliver more while controlling costs. Enterprise leaders expect technology investments to contribute more directly to efficiency, agility and commercial performance. Increasingly, these expectations converge within the content ecosystem.

This shift has profound implications for DAM leaders.

It means that conversations once centred on content control are becoming conversations about content contribution. The emphasis moves from whether assets can be found to whether they can be effectively utilised. The discussion expands beyond repository adoption towards questions of operational effectiveness and business impact.

Can existing investments support future campaigns?

Where are teams unnecessarily recreating content?

What forms of friction prevent assets from reaching their full potential?

How much value remains trapped within libraries because organisations lack sufficient confidence to reuse what they already own?

These are not purely technical questions.

They are strategic ones.

In many respects, they reflect a broader change in how organisations think about content itself. Content is no longer viewed solely as an output of marketing activity. Increasingly, it represents an operational capability underpinning customer engagement, retail media initiatives, sponsorship programmes and increasingly personalised experiences across multiple channels. Content has become integral to how organisations create and capture value.

From Control to Contribution

When viewed through this lens, the role of DAM becomes considerably more significant.

The purpose of governance is no longer simply to establish control. Its purpose is to create confidence. Confidence that assets can be trusted. Confidence that teams can collaborate effectively. Confidence that existing investments can continue generating returns long after their initial use. Confidence that content can move efficiently through increasingly complex environments without introducing unnecessary friction.

The Emergence of Content Intelligence

This is where the idea of Content Intelligence begins to emerge.

Not as another technology category competing for budget and attention. Nor as an attempt to diminish the importance of DAM foundations that organisations have spent years establishing. Rather, Content Intelligence represents a shift in perspective. It reflects an understanding that the value of content lies not merely in its existence, but in an organisation's ability to understand its potential and act upon that understanding.

The distinction is subtle but important.

Historically, organisations have invested heavily in answering questions such as: What content do we have? Where is it stored? Is it approved? Increasingly, however, they need answers to different questions altogether. Which assets should be prioritised? How can existing content support emerging opportunities? What barriers continue to prevent effective reuse? Where can greater value be realised without continually increasing production expenditure?

These questions demand more than governance.

They require judgement.

They require context.

They require organisations to understand not only what their content is, but what it might enable.

Understanding Where Value Stalls

Interestingly, other disciplines have experienced similar transitions. Revenue Operations emerged from the recognition that commercial performance suffers when organisations lack visibility into how opportunities progress through complex processes. The objective was never simply better reporting. It was better decision-making.

It was understanding where momentum stalls, where interventions create impact and how systems can be designed to support more predictable outcomes.

Content ecosystems increasingly present similar challenges.

Value is created when content moves effectively through the organisation. Value becomes trapped when uncertainty, fragmentation or operational friction slow that movement. Understanding where these conditions exist, and addressing them proactively, represents a significant opportunity for organisations seeking to improve both efficiency and performance.

The Natural Progression of DAM

For DAM leaders, this creates an opportunity to contribute more directly to conversations that have traditionally sat beyond the boundaries of asset management. The work they have undertaken to establish governance, trust and consistency remains indispensable. Yet those same capabilities can now support broader organisational objectives around utilisation, agility and return on investment.

This is not a departure from the principles that have shaped successful DAM programmes.

It is their natural progression.

Because the strongest DAM functions of the future are unlikely to distinguish themselves solely through the comprehensiveness of their libraries or the sophistication of their metadata models. They will distinguish themselves through their ability to help organisations understand where content creates value, where that value remains unrealised and what actions are required to maximise the return generated from existing investments.

Ultimately, the organisations that derive the greatest advantage from their content will not necessarily be those creating the largest volumes of assets. They will be those that understand how to extract the greatest value from the content they already possess. They will know what they have, understand how it can be applied and possess the confidence required to act decisively when opportunities arise.

That is the promise of Content Intelligence.

Not more information… Better decisions.

Yet even the strongest insights have limitations if organisations struggle to translate understanding into action. Many enterprises know where their content resides. They understand the governance requirements surrounding its use.

They have invested heavily in creating order and confidence.

And still, campaigns continue to experience delays.

Because one final challenge remains. Approved content is not always ready content.

Increasingly, the greatest source of friction lies in the distance between those two states.

Industry Perspective:

> “
> *Making video searchable and actionable at scale enables teams to find, reuse and measure the impact of content far more efficiently than traditional storage systems. This creates significant opportunities to streamline workflows, accelerate campaigns and gain*
> **Marc Trimuschat Director of Worldwide Storage and Data Protection, AWS**

04

Approved Doesn't Mean Ready

One of the more frustrating realities of modern content operations is that organisations often struggle most with the content they believe is finished.

The creative work has been completed. Stakeholders have aligned. Reviews have taken place. Assets have been uploaded into the DAM. From the perspective of those responsible for producing the content, the process appears to have reached its natural conclusion.

And yet, campaigns continue to stall.

Launch dates shift. Regional markets hesitate. Media teams wait for confirmation. Production teams revisit work they thought had been completed weeks earlier. The same question emerges repeatedly across different organisations and different industries:

"If this content was approved, why isn't it live?"

The answer lies in a distinction that many enterprises have yet to fully acknowledge.

Approval and readiness are not the same thing.

Historically, the gap between those two states was relatively small. Content moved through comparatively linear workflows. Once creative had been approved, publication often followed shortly afterwards. Delays certainly occurred, but they tended to be exceptions rather than defining characteristics of the operating model.

Today's reality is very different.

Content now exists within ecosystems characterised by increasing complexity. Assets move across regions, channels and platforms, each introducing their own requirements and constraints. Retail Media environments impose technical specifications. Local markets require adaptation. Rights considerations vary by territory. Legal obligations evolve continuously. Teams that were once peripheral to campaign execution increasingly play critical roles in determining whether content can proceed.

Approval, therefore, has become an important milestone.

It is no longer the finish line.

This distinction is important because many organisations continue to operate according to assumptions shaped by an earlier era. Approval remains the dominant measure of progress. Teams work diligently towards securing sign-off, believing that completion naturally follows. When delays emerge afterwards, they are often interpreted as isolated incidents rather than indicators of a broader operational challenge.

The consequence is an environment in which organisations repeatedly solve the symptoms without addressing the underlying condition.

Additional reviews are introduced.

Extra checkpoints emerge.

Processes become increasingly dependent upon informal conversations and individual expertise.

People work harder.

Campaigns continue to struggle.
In many respects, this is entirely understandable.

Different functions within the organisation are optimising for different outcomes. Legal teams seek to minimise risk. Brand teams protect consistency and quality. Regional stakeholders ensure relevance within local markets. Media teams focus on timing and execution. Each objective is reasonable. Each contributes genuine value.

The difficulty arises because few organisations explicitly design for the movement of content between these competing priorities.

As a result, the burden of coordination falls to individuals.

Projects advance through persistence rather than process.

Institutional knowledge becomes indispensable.

Escalation becomes normalised.

The organisation develops a dependence on heroic effort.

These dynamics rarely appear within traditional programme reporting. Yet they often represent some of the most significant barriers to organisational agility.

Their impact extends far beyond operational inconvenience.

Campaigns that launch late may miss moments of heightened consumer attention. Seasonal opportunities diminish in value once their relevance has passed. Retail Media initiatives lose effectiveness when content cannot keep pace with buying cycles.

Marketing teams devote increasing energy towards managing complexity rather than pursuing innovation and growth.

Perhaps more subtly, organisations begin adapting their behaviour to compensate for the friction they experience.

Regional teams commission new content because adapting existing assets feels too uncertain.

Stakeholders become increasingly cautious because they lack confidence in downstream processes.

Production budgets absorb work that stronger operational pathways might have avoided altogether.

The organisation continues moving forward.

It simply does so less efficiently than it otherwise could.

This is why readiness deserves greater attention.

Readiness is not simply a question of whether content has been reviewed. It concerns whether the organisation possesses sufficient confidence to act. Have the relevant considerations been addressed? Can teams proceed without repeated cycles of validation? Does the content have a clear pathway towards activation?

The distinction may appear subtle.

In practice, it changes the conversation entirely.

Many organisations remain approval-centric. Success is defined by achieving sign-off, with the assumption that activation will naturally follow. More mature organisations increasingly adopt an activation-centric perspective. They recognise that downstream requirements influence campaign success just as profoundly as upstream creative decisions. The most sophisticated organisations go one step further still. They treat readiness as an operational capability in its own right, designing processes intended to support confidence, responsiveness and adaptability at scale.

Importantly, this does not imply that organisations should compromise governance in pursuit of speed.

The objective is not faster approval.

It is confident activation.

Governance remains essential because governance creates trust. Trust enables movement. Movement enables value creation. When organisations treat these capabilities as competing priorities, they often struggle to achieve either effectively.
When they recognise their interdependence, entirely different possibilities begin to emerge.

This is where DAM leaders have a particularly important contribution to make.

For years, they have focused on establishing the conditions required for confidence. They have improved metadata standards, strengthened governance frameworks and increased organisational trust in approved assets. These efforts were never simply administrative exercises. They represented investments in certainty.

The opportunity now lies in extending that certainty further downstream.

Not by assuming ownership of every aspect of campaign execution, but by helping organisations recognise that readiness begins long before content reaches its final stages. By ensuring that governance supports movement rather than inadvertently constraining it. By participating in conversations about how content journeys unfold beyond the boundaries of the repository itself.

The question for DAM leaders is not whether they should become responsible for readiness.

It is whether they can afford to remain absent from the conversation.

Because increasingly, organisations compete on their ability to respond quickly without sacrificing confidence. They compete on their ability to activate opportunities while maintaining quality and control. They compete on their ability to transform approved content into meaningful action with minimal friction.

Under these conditions, readiness itself becomes a strategic capability.

The organisations most likely to thrive will not necessarily be those producing the largest quantities of content, nor those introducing the greatest number of governance checkpoints. They will be those capable of balancing control with responsiveness, creating operating models that support both confidence and speed.

Approval will always matter.

But approval alone rarely determines success.

Content creates value when it reaches the audiences it was intended to influence, in the moments it was intended to matter. Ensuring that content is genuinely prepared for those moments may prove to be one of the defining challenges, and opportunities, facing DAM leaders in the years ahead.

Industry Perspective:

> *Making video searchable and actionable at scale enables teams to find, reuse and measure the impact of content far more efficiently than traditional storage systems. This creates significant opportunities to streamline workflows, accelerate campaigns and gain real-time insight into content performance.*
> **Marc Trimuschat Director of Worldwide Storage and Data Protection, AWS**

04

Why Good DAM Teams Still Struggle to Demonstrate Value

Success Often Looks Invisible

One of the great frustrations experienced by many DAM leaders is that success does not always look like success.

Programmes that have transformed governance, improved discoverability and increased organisational confidence in content often continue to fight for recognition, budget and executive sponsorship. Teams that have spent years building robust operating foundations still find themselves being asked familiar questions: Why do we need to invest further? What value is DAM actually delivering? How do we know this is working?

These questions can feel particularly challenging because, in many cases, the value created by DAM is both substantial and difficult to observe directly.

The strongest DAM programmes rarely draw attention to themselves. Instead, they remove friction before it becomes visible. They reduce duplication before unnecessary costs emerge. They improve confidence in existing assets before teams commission additional production. They establish governance structures that prevent issues from escalating into crises.

Success often takes the form of problems that never occur.

This creates an inherent challenge. Organisations tend to celebrate what they can easily see. Revenue growth is visible. Campaign performance is visible. Product launches are visible. The operational conditions that enable those outcomes are often much less so.

Few executives pause to consider the rights issue that never materialised because governance frameworks worked as intended. Rarely do teams celebrate the campaigns that launched smoothly because metadata standards made relevant assets easier to identify. Almost nobody recognises the production budgets that remained intact because confidence in existing content enabled reuse rather than recreation.

Yet these outcomes matter.

They matter commercially.

They matter operationally.

And increasingly, they matter strategically.

The difficulty lies not in the absence of value, but in the language used to describe it.

Speaking the Language of Value

Historically, DAM programmes have often reported success through measures that reflected their operational responsibilities. Asset volumes increased. User adoption improved. Metadata completeness strengthened. Governance policies matured. These metrics remain useful because they provide insight into whether programmes are functioning effectively and whether organisations are developing the disciplines required to manage increasingly complex content environments.

The difficulty arises when these measures are presented as evidence of business value in their own right.

Outside the DAM function, executive conversations tend to centre around a different set of priorities. Leadership teams are increasingly concerned with questions of efficiency, agility and return on investment. They want to understand whether campaigns can move more quickly, whether existing investments are being utilised effectively and whether the organisation is becoming more capable of responding to changing market conditions without continually increasing costs.

The distinction is important because it suggests that many DAM teams have not been measuring the wrong things. Rather, they have been measuring only part of the picture.

Metadata quality, for example, is not valuable because it improves metadata quality. It becomes valuable because it enables confidence in discovery and reuse. Governance frameworks are not important simply because they reduce organisational risk. Their significance lies in the trust they create, allowing teams to move more decisively without repeated cycles of validation and uncertainty. Improvements in discoverability matter because they reduce the likelihood that valuable assets remain hidden while production teams invest in creating work that, in some form, already exists elsewhere within the business.

Seen individually, these relationships can appear relatively modest. Taken together, however, they reveal something much more significant. DAM programmes influence organisational performance because they shape the conditions under which content creates value. They affect how easily assets move between teams, how confidently content can be repurposed and how effectively organisations derive ongoing returns from investments that have already been made.

This perhaps explains why demonstrating DAM value has always been challenging. Unlike functions with direct ownership of revenue generation or campaign execution, DAM typically exerts influence rather than control. Marketing teams remain accountable for campaign performance. Regional stakeholders determine local execution strategies. Media functions oversee distribution and activation. DAM sits within this ecosystem as an enabler, strengthening the infrastructure upon which these activities depend while rarely claiming sole responsibility for their success.

Yet influence should not be mistaken for insignificance.

Influence Should Not Be Mistaken for Insignificance

As content assumes greater strategic importance within organisations, the capabilities that support its effective use become increasingly consequential. The ability to identify suitable assets quickly influences responsiveness. Confidence in governance affects the willingness of teams to pursue reuse rather than recreation. Visibility into rights and approval status shapes the speed with which opportunities can be activated. The commercial implications may not always be immediately visible, but they are nevertheless real.

For many DAM leaders, the opportunity lies not in changing the nature of the work itself, but in changing the way that work is understood.

Governance has always mattered. Metadata has always mattered. Trust has always mattered. The challenge now is to articulate why these capabilities matter beyond the boundaries of the repository, and to demonstrate how they contribute to the broader objectives that organisations increasingly prioritise.

This does not require DAM leaders to overstate their impact or claim ownership of outcomes that belong elsewhere. Rather, it requires them to help their organisations understand the relationship between governance and growth, between confidence and utilisation, and between operational excellence and commercial performance.

The strongest DAM leaders recognise that their role has always extended beyond repositories and taxonomies. They have always been creating the conditions required for content to generate value. The challenge now is making that contribution more visible.

Making Value More Visible

Because organisations do not invest in DAM to increase asset counts or improve metadata completion rates. They invest because they believe content should work harder on behalf of the business. They invest because they want to reduce friction, improve responsiveness and maximise the return generated from the creative assets they already possess.

The future of DAM may depend not only upon the value it creates, but upon its ability to express that value in language the wider organisation recognises and respects.

That may prove to be one of the most important leadership challenges of all.

Industry Perspective:

> *"All of our global departments can now easily access our content in a way that was impossible previously. This allows us to make better content, faster and with greater continuity across channels and regions."*
>
> **Arlo Rosner**
> **Executive Producer, YETI**

FW2

Framework 2: The DAM Value Chain

One of the recurring themes throughout this report is that DAM creates value indirectly. Its contribution is rarely limited to the repository itself. Instead, DAM influences the conditions under which content can move efficiently, be trusted confidently and generate meaningful returns for the organisation.

The relationship between these capabilities can be understood through the following value chain:

Governance → Confidence → Reuse → Readiness → Business Outcomes

Each stage builds upon the one before it.

- Governance establishes consistency, trust and control.
- Confidence enables teams to act without unnecessary uncertainty.
- Reuse increases the value generated from existing content investments.
- Readiness ensures content can move effectively into activation.
- Business Outcomes emerge through improved agility, reduced duplication, stronger utilisation and more effective campaign execution.

Viewed in isolation, governance activities can sometimes appear operational in nature. Viewed as part of a broader value chain, their contribution becomes much clearer.

The role of DAM is not simply to manage assets. It is to create the conditions that allow content to deliver greater value for the organisation.

08

What High-Performing DAM Teams Do Differently

There is no universal blueprint for DAM excellence.

The realities facing a global consumer brand differ markedly from those confronting a broadcaster, a retailer or a membership organisation. Organisational structures vary. Technology ecosystems evolve. Priorities shift in response to changing commercial pressures and market conditions.

Yet despite these differences, certain patterns appear repeatedly within organisations that consistently derive greater value from their content investments.

These organisations are not necessarily characterised by larger budgets, more sophisticated technology stacks or greater volumes of content. Nor have they solved every challenge associated with managing increasingly complex content ecosystems.

What distinguishes them is often more subtle.

They tend to think differently.

One of the clearest differences lies in the way governance is perceived.

Less mature organisations frequently view governance as an endpoint. The objective is to establish order, maintain control and reduce risk. High-performing teams certainly recognise the importance of these outcomes, but they increasingly regard governance as an enabler rather than a destination. Governance creates confidence. Confidence enables action. It allows teams to move more decisively, collaborate more effectively and pursue opportunities with greater certainty.

The question shifts from:

“Have we governed this appropriately?”

towards:

“What does effective governance make possible?”

Ask Different Questions

The same pattern emerges in conversations about content investment.

Organisations under pressure often respond by increasing production volumes. More campaigns require more assets. New channels create new demands. Additional markets necessitate localisation. While these pressures are entirely understandable, high-performing teams appear less preoccupied with the quantity of content being created and more interested in the value being generated from the content that already exists.

This distinction has important implications.

Rather than assuming that unmet demand inevitably requires additional production, these organisations seek to understand whether existing investments can be adapted, extended or repurposed more effectively. They recognise that utilisation represents an opportunity for growth in its own right, particularly within environments where content budgets are subject to increasing scrutiny.

Looking Beyond the Boundaries of DAM

This perspective naturally encourages a broader understanding of the role DAM plays within the organisation.

For many years, DAM programmes have focused primarily on what occurs within the repository itself. High-performing teams increasingly pay equal attention to what happens beyond it. They seek to understand how content moves through the organisation, where momentum is lost and which forms of friction repeatedly undermine performance.

Their interest extends beyond assets towards the systems and behaviours surrounding them.

- Where do campaigns slow down?
- Which decisions create unnecessary delays?
- What conditions encourage reuse?
- Where does confidence begin to deteriorate?

The answers to these questions rarely reside within any single function.

They emerge through collaboration across multiple disciplines.

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Curiosity Creates Influence

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Their interest extends beyond assets towards the systems and behaviours surrounding them.

- Curiosity about how content creates value beyond the repository.
- Curiosity about the pressures facing adjacent functions.
- Curiosity about the relationship between operational excellence and commercial performance.

Small Changes, Significant Impact

Over time, this curiosity often changes the nature of conversations taking place within organisations.

Discussions centred exclusively on asset counts and adoption rates begin to incorporate concepts such as utilisation, responsiveness and return on investment. Governance initiatives are considered not only through the lens of risk reduction, but also through their potential to improve confidence and accelerate decision-making. The DAM function gradually becomes associated with enabling progress rather than maintaining control.

This transition rarely occurs through large-scale transformation programmes.

More often, it emerges incrementally.

A team identifies opportunities for greater reuse within a particular market. Governance frameworks are refined to support faster activation. Stakeholders begin involving DAM leaders earlier in strategic discussions because they recognise the value of their perspective.

Momentum builds, the role expands. The perception of DAM changes accordingly.

From Repository to Strategic Capability

Perhaps this is the most important observation of all.

The organisations deriving the greatest value from their content ecosystems are rarely those that have abandoned the principles upon which DAM was built. They continue to prioritise governance. They continue to invest in discoverability. They continue to recognise the importance of trust and consistency.

The difference lies in what those foundations are ultimately designed to achieve.

The strongest DAM teams understand that governance has value because it enables confidence. Confidence has value because it enables action. Action has value because it creates outcomes that matter to the organisation.

This progression transforms DAM from a repository into a capability.

From an operational function into a strategic contributor.

From something organisations invest in because they feel they should, into something they value because they can clearly understand the impact it creates.

None of these shifts occur overnight.

Nor do they require organisations to discard the progress they have already made.

In many respects, the opposite is true.

The foundations required to support this next stage of maturity already exist within many DAM programmes. The challenge is recognising the opportunities those foundations make possible and ensuring that the language used to describe DAM reflects the value it increasingly delivers.

For DAM leaders, this should be an encouraging prospect.

The future does not necessarily demand reinvention.

It may simply require a willingness to build upon strengths that have been there all along.

09

Ask the DAM Question!

Throughout this report, one theme has emerged repeatedly.

The challenges facing DAM leaders today are not necessarily the same challenges they faced when many of their programmes were first established.

Governance remains essential. Trust remains essential. Metadata remains essential.

Yet the expectations surrounding content, and the role it plays within organisations, continue to expand.

As a result, the questions worth asking are changing too.

Looking Beyond Content Creation

Perhaps the most important of these concerns the relationship between content and value.

Many organisations have become highly effective at creating content. Far fewer have developed a comparable understanding of how effectively that content continues to serve the business once it has been approved and distributed. Production investment is often closely monitored. Media spend receives intense scrutiny. The ongoing value generated from existing content is much less frequently examined.

This raises important considerations.

To what extent is the organisation measuring the utilisation of content rather than simply its creation? How much confidence exists in the reuse of existing assets? When new production is commissioned, is it because genuinely new requirements have emerged, or because existing content feels too difficult, uncertain or time-consuming to adapt?

Examining Operational Readiness

Equally important are the questions surrounding operational readiness.

Where does content most frequently encounter friction as it moves through the organisation? Which forms of delay have become accepted as inevitable? How dependent are campaigns upon individual expertise, informal escalation or last-minute intervention? If campaign volumes were to increase significantly over the next two years, which aspects of the current operating model would come under greatest strain?

Rethinking How Success Is Measured

These considerations are not solely operational.

They are increasingly strategic.

As content assumes greater importance within customer engagement, commerce and brand experience, organisations may need to reconsider how they define the contribution of DAM itself. Are existing measures of success sufficient? Do they adequately reflect the value that governance, trust and confidence enable elsewhere within the business? Are DAM leaders being invited into conversations where their perspectives might influence broader organisational outcomes?

There are no universally correct answers to these questions.

Nor should there be.

The circumstances facing each organisation will differ according to its markets, ambitions and maturity. Yet the willingness to ask such questions, and to engage thoughtfully with the tensions they reveal, may prove increasingly important.

Because the future of DAM is unlikely to be determined solely by advances in technology.

It will be shaped by the decisions organisations make about how content creates value.

Whether they continue to optimise for control or seek a more effective balance between governance and agility.

Whether they view content primarily as an output or increasingly as an asset capable of generating ongoing returns.

Whether they measure success through activity alone or develop a richer understanding of utilisation, readiness and impact.

For DAM leaders, these questions represent more than an intellectual exercise.

They present an opportunity.

An opportunity to build upon the considerable progress already achieved. To expand the conversations taking place around content within their organisations.

To demonstrate how DAM contributes not only to governance, but to confidence, responsiveness and performance.

The work required to support this transition should not be underestimated.

Neither should the foundations that already exist.

Many DAM teams have spent years creating the conditions necessary for content to be trusted, understood and governed effectively. Those capabilities remain indispensable. The challenge now lies in ensuring they are fully leveraged in service of the broader outcomes organisations increasingly seek to achieve.

Preparing for What Comes Next

The future will almost certainly demand more from content.

The question is whether organisations are prepared to ask more of the systems, processes and assumptions that surround it.

The answers may determine not only how effectively content performs, but how strategically DAM itself is understood in the years ahead.

10
What Comes Next?

The foundations of DAM have never been more important.
Governance matters. Trust matters. Discoverability matters. The work DAM leaders have undertaken over many years has enabled organisations to bring order to increasingly complex content environments and establish confidence in assets that support some of their most important initiatives.

At the same time, the expectations surrounding content continue to evolve.

Organisations are being asked to move more quickly, operate more efficiently and demonstrate greater value from existing investments. Content sits at the heart of many of these ambitions, shaping customer experiences, supporting campaigns and enabling growth across an expanding range of channels and markets.

The opportunity for DAM leaders is not to abandon the foundations they have built.

It is to build upon them.

The organisations that succeed in the years ahead are unlikely to be those with the largest repositories or the most sophisticated taxonomies alone. They will be those capable of transforming trusted content into meaningful outcomes, balancing governance with agility, and creating the confidence required for content to move effectively through the business.

The future of DAM will not be defined solely by technology.

It will be shaped by the decisions organisations make about how content creates value.

The good news is that many DAM leaders are already much closer to that future than they realise.

Philippe Brodeur CEO, Overcast

About Overcast

Overcast helps enterprise organisations create greater value from content.

Trusted by some of the world's leading brands and media organisations, Overcast supports video-first enterprises through content operations capabilities designed to improve governance, increase utilisation and accelerate the movement of content across increasingly complex ecosystems.

By helping organisations establish confidence in their content and the processes surrounding it, Overcast enables teams to work more effectively, respond more quickly and maximise the return generated from their creative investments.

Learn more at overcasthq.com

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The views expressed in this report are intended to encourage discussion and reflection. They should not be interpreted as prescriptive guidance, nor as representative of any single organisation or industry perspective.

500+	**50M+**	**99.9%**	**78%**
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