

THE AI AUDIT GUY

The 5 Time Leaks

What I keep finding inside marketing and creative ops teams.

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WHY THIS EXISTS

Most teams aren't burned out from work.

They're burned out from friction.

After 20+ years inside marketing and creative ops, and dozens of recent audits, the same five leaks come up every single time.

This isn't a strategy deck. It's a punch list.

Five leaks. Five fixes. Each one usually pays for itself inside 30 days.

If you recognise more than two of these in your team, you're not running an ops function. You're running a coping mechanism.

These aren't "AI transformations." They're plumbing jobs.

The Bad Brief Tax.

Your \$150k Creative Director is doing \$15-an-hour work.

Here's a workflow I see in nine out of ten creative teams.

A brief comes in from an account manager, a marketing lead, or a client. Something like: "Need a banner ASAP. Make it pop."

No dimensions. No budget code. No target audience. No deadline that actually means anything.

What happens next? Your senior creative spends two days in Slack chasing the missing specs before they can start their actual job.

I call it the Bad Brief Tax. It's the most expensive bottleneck in mid-market creative ops, and most teams have just accepted it as the price of doing business.

It isn't. It's a leak.

THE FIX

A Brief Intake Agent. Sits at the front door of your creative process. Every incoming brief gets scanned against a list of mandatory fields. If anything's missing, the agent auto-drafts a polite pushback email back to the sender. The brief never reaches your creative team until it's complete.

- Build time: 2 to 3 weeks.
- Hours saved per senior creative: 5 to 10 per week.
- Senior salary cost recovered: roughly \$15k to \$30k per quarter.

Protect the art. Automate the gate.

The Swivel Chair.

Look at one screen. Swivel. Type into another. Repeat.

There's a workflow I keep finding in finance, marketing, and ops teams. It looks like this:
Open the email. Read the invoice. Open the accounting tool. Type the line items in.
Categorise. Save. Next email.

Multiply that across every receipt, every client invoice, every campaign asset, every CSV that needs to land somewhere else.

I audited a construction company on the Northern Beaches. Their Office Manager was spending 8 hours every single week manually keying receipts from Gmail into Xero. A full working day. Every week. Year-round.

We didn't hire her a temp. We built a small AI agent (the team called it Kevin). Kevin reads the invoice, extracts the data, drafts the bill. The Office Manager just clicks Approve.

Eight hours a week back. Four hundred-plus hours a year. One agent.

THE FIX

A custom data-entry agent that lives between your inbox and your accounting tool, your CRM, or your project tracker. Wherever your team is currently swiveling between screens.

- Build time: 2 to 4 weeks per integration.
- Hours saved: typically a full working day per role, per week.
- Side benefit: dramatically lower data entry errors.

Stop paying human salaries to do robot work.

The Approval Maze.

Your approvals are buried in three different inboxes.

How does an approval flow in your team right now?

If the answer involves email threads, Slack DMs, a group chat, a shared doc with “add comments here,” or “I’ll just text Dave”, your approvals are leaking time.

I see this in every audit. Approvals get lost. Things sit on someone’s desk for three days because nobody knows whose desk it’s on. Senior leaders chase up the same approval three different ways.

The cost isn’t just the chasing. It’s the drag every approval adds to every project. Multiply that across a quarter and team velocity drops 20 to 30 percent.

THE FIX

Routing automation. Every brief, every asset, every spend has a defined approval path.

The system knows who needs to approve what, when, and pings them with a deadline. If they don’t respond in 24 hours, it escalates.

No more “Can you just chase that one up” conversations.

- Build time: 1 to 2 weeks.
- Hours saved: 3 to 6 per coordinator per week.
- Bigger win: project drag eliminated.

Approvals shouldn’t rely on someone remembering.

The Monday Morning Report.

By the time the report's done, the numbers are old.

There's an analyst, a coordinator, or a manager somewhere on your team. Every Monday morning, they spend two to four hours pulling numbers from five different tools and stitching them into a spreadsheet.

Analytics. The CRM. The ad platforms. The project tracker. The finance system.

By the time the report is built, the data is already stale. By the time the team reads it Tuesday, it's a week old in a fast-moving environment.

The reporting isn't the problem. The manual stitching is.

THE FIX

Auto-rolling reports. The system pulls from every connected tool overnight, builds the spreadsheet (or dashboard, or email summary) automatically, and lands it in everyone's inbox by 7am.

Your analyst gets their Monday morning back. Your team gets fresh data instead of last week's.

- Build time: 1 to 3 weeks depending on tool count.
- Hours saved: 4 to 6 per analyst per week.
- Side benefit: leadership stops making decisions on stale data.

If a robot can build it, a robot should build it.

The Asset Hunt.

Final_v3.pdf. Final_FINAL.pdf. Final_FINAL_actually_use_this.pdf.

We've all done it. Named a file "final." Then "final_v2." Then "final_FINAL." Then "final_FINAL_USE_THIS."

The problem isn't the naming. It's that there's no system to find anything later.

Senior team spends 20 to 30 minutes before every meeting hunting for the right version of an asset. Then they email it around. Then someone uses the wrong version anyway and it ends up on a client deck.

This is asset chaos. It scales worse than every other leak on this list, because it gets exponentially harder as your team and library grow.

THE FIX

AI auto-tagging at upload. Every asset gets metadata applied automatically: client, project, version, status, owner, date. Search becomes findable. Latest version becomes obvious. Nobody emails attachments around any more.

Pair it with a naming convention enforcement layer (the system rejects assets that don't follow the rules) and the chaos disappears.

- Build time: 1 to 2 weeks.
- Hours saved: 2 to 4 per team member per week.
- Multiplied across a 15-person team, that's a part-time hire's worth of hours.

The latest version should announce itself.

WHAT NOW?

Three or more of these in your team?

That's a leak problem. Not a strategy problem.

The good news: every one of these is a 2 to 4 week fix. Not a 6-month transformation. Not a 50-page strategy deck. Working code, connected systems, hours back.

HOW I WORK

I run two engagements:

TIER 1 / Audit \$10k

A diagnostic of your existing marketing and creative ops process. Identify the leaks. Map the fixes. Prioritise by ROI. You walk away with a clear plan.

TIER 2 / Sprint \$22k

Audit + build + deploy. We pick the highest-leverage leak and fix it in 4 weeks. Working systems, hours back, ROI you can take to your CFO.

NEXT STEP

Find out which leaks are costing your team most.

Take the 3-min Workflow Scorecard:

theaiauditguy.com.au

Or book a 20-min Workflow Diagnostic Call:

calendly.com/peterdburge/workflow-diagnostic

No pitch deck. No “AI transformation” fluff. If we're not a fit, I'll tell you in the first 10 minutes.

Cheers,

Pete

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