HOW Design Live

Andrew Slater, VP of Enterprise Sales at Celtra – *Find Out How Big Brands Are Driving Faster Creative Production*

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Speaker Introduction by Amy Conover, HOW Show Director:

Welcome everyone. Today we have an incredible session planned on HOW Design Online with Celtra and Andrew Slater will be presenting. I'm just happy to have you all here today. My name is Amy Conover and I am the Content Director and the Show Director for HOW Design Events.

Let me thank Celtra, our sponsor, for working with us on this session. I'll tell you a little bit about Celtra. They help creative and in house marketing teams, design, approve and deliver digital creative across the ever-growing number of campaigns, markets, and design environs. Celtra's creative automation software for marketing helps brands move faster than ever while dramatically scaling content production. Companies like Adidas, Spotify, Unilever, Lululemon, Yeti, and hundreds, more partner with Celtra to cut production costs while increasing efficiencies and output in the cloud.

Now let me tell you about my new friend, Andrew Slater. Andrew is currently the VP of Enterprise Sales at Celtra. He is passionate about all things digital and less to help brands find their full creative scaling potential through automation. Slater previously served in leadership roles at TiVo, Berg, and Trimmer Video. In his free time, he can be found, keeping very busy running after his one year old son, which he and I just said is more like a full time job so that we all, all of us as parents know that that could be a little time consuming. So Andrew, thank you so much for, for joining us today. Thank you. Celtra for presenting this. I'm going to go dark and let you take the lead and I will jump back on for the Q and a

Andrew Slater - Celtra Session Start:

Awesome, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. So kind of what we're gonna be talking about today is why creative automation is a must in the new remote reality. Some of the things we're going to cover today are kind of this situation. So stats and facts around everything that's kind of happening in today's environment, the ideas, so brand responses who's done it. Well, some of the challenges and then also new technologies, creative automation. So a new kind of category that Celtra has come up with to help brands really solve things efficiently. So next, let's start talking about some of these facts. So U S retail sales rose slowly in July, 1.2% brick and mortar down 43% from last year.

I don't think that's a surprise to any of us. I think the first time I've gone to a brick and mortar store was a local store here in Hoboken. And it's a completely different environment. Now, you know, it's almost feels weird to touch things. You just kind of want to keep your hands to yourself. It's just really crazy. Spending is trending up that 5.6% gains in July alone and online sales grew 55% in July. I don't think this is a surprise to anybody because everyone is really shifting to e-commerce and you need to do that really efficiently because so many of these brick and mortar stores were not set up for an eCommerce environment are not prepped and ready for kind of how things are now.

But what's consumers want, food, beverages, consumer goods with safety use and consume messaging. Though it's something that's near and dear to my heart and online shopping transparency and delivery times stock and processes. So these have almost become table stakes where you expect this. It doesn't matter what site you're going to. When you are shopping online, you are expecting transparency across kind of every different facet of that process. And 64% people want brands to continue to advertise products is normal but beware of the tone. Only 7% think brand should stick to their regular tone. And

70% of people want positive stories from brands. I think we could all use that for sure. I definitely would fall into that 70% camp

And finally kind of consistent branding. 60% of consumers distrust the brand when ads or content doesn't match the brands website app or store makes total sense. And then finally, a lot of what we're talking about today is creative and creative variety. 60%, 66% of consumers find creative assets from brands to be repetitive. I know I certainly do when I get that same ad over and over again, that's retargeting me no matter where I go, whether I'm on social, whether I'm on mobile websites, whether I'm on desktop. And I see that same creative start to get that kind of like banner blindness, if you will, where you know, it's going to be there, you've seen it before and you don't want to see it again. You want some new messaging. So pandemic plus cultural and political tensions means brands need to be able to shift gears quickly and on the fly.

So now we're going to talk about kind of who got it, right? So these are just a small collection of brands that did not stray from their core DNA, but also were able to change messaging at the speed of current events and culture. And they really did a great job bringing this to market. So first, we'll talk about WeTransfer. They've donated their entire homepage wallpaper to Black Lives Matter. I think everybody's familiar with WeTransfer. At least the majority of you are where you get a link. You are redirected to WeTransfer's homepage. And it's essentially this homepage takeover where you are served this full page ad and they do an amazing job with these kind of over the years, I've seen some really cool executions, but what they did here was amazing. They dedicated their homepage to 8 Can't Wait. So really kind of leaning in and spreading the message around kind of the different uses of you know, forced policies and police can reduce killings, and save lives, which is something that's incredibly important and something everybody needs to be aware of.

And then looking at McDonalds, another place that's near and dear to my heart. Tapping into the unofficial pandemic pastime and that's puzzles. So McDonald's created a burger puzzle, so everybody can sit around at home, you can build this burger puzzle, then you can absolutely go to McDonald's and you can pick up that burger because they're delicious.

And then Mattel. We launched a special edition of Little People, which is super cool. So the first responders and also those frontline workers, something that I think is awesome that, you know, I can bring home and show to my son and get him to start engaging with these really cool figures

And then finally Coors Light. In good deeds without looking opportunistic in what we're looking at here is this picture on the left is this amazing woman named Olive. Her family took a picture of her when she was in quarantine and she loves Coors Light. And she held up a sign saying, I need more beer. It went viral. It was everywhere. Coors Light took notice and they sent her 150 beers. So she could consume them during her quarantine. And here she is saying, I got more beer, just very cool, just good representations of how brands can really pivot quickly to get new messaging out there to kind of stay current with the times, but how to brands become more agile while creating remotely. So this new kind of world that we're living in, where everyone is remote, it makes collaboration really difficult. You're not able to sit in the same room with everybody. A lot of times you're using different kind of disparate pieces of technology that don't allow you to collaborate and create at the same time, simple. They need software for remote collaboration and production. And that is where creative automation comes into play for marketers. This software gives in house teams a solution to allow them to exponentially increase the variety of continent ads across all the different markets and formats and channels and campaigns.

Kind of looking at this today and how this would be kind of broken out for, you know, any type of a brand is that you have design on one side. So have those offline design tools like the Adobe Creative Suite. And then on the other side, you have distribution. So all those content demands for kind of the

different channels, the different sizes, all the different content that you need to produce to satisfy those demands that you may be getting from the market and the marketing team. And in the middle sits an army of FTE employees, of contractors, of production agencies that are working to produce the crazy amount of content that's increasing year over year. And that is where creative and automation can help solve a lot of things for these production armies and enable them to go from one template to many permutations faster than ever before, while leveraging automation and letting computers do the work the computers were meant to do. And that is scale things up really quickly.

So looking at the different content and scaling benefits of creative automation, we have design and layout. We have content variety, we have marketing language. So think localization and then the channels and sizing, which is a super tedious part of the kind of content and scaling that everyone kind of goes through. So looking at some of these, so we have content scaling here. So changing kind of the different messaging, changing the, the hero images, changing the CTA is the background images, the product shots, right? All things that, you know, typically require one by one manual production and an offline design tool.

And then next looking at marketing language. So localization, you know again, having to input, copying a very manual one by one way, I think localization is something that we hear about all the time for the brands that we work with and kind of leveraging creative automation. It allows you to very quickly bake all of these together using kind of a combination of template and content feeds. It allows you to really kind of build these efficiently, you know, more efficiently than ever before, and then the different kind of channels and sizes that you need to create for, right. I think your every year, these continued to increase. Tik Tok is a new one that has recently popped up where a lot of brands need to be. So all the different channels and sizes that these teams in house need to create, you know, on a daily basis to satisfy these different campaign briefs and kind of looking at all these different scaling dimensions, the one kind of common denominator in theme that needs to be there is collaboration and speed.

And that is where creative automation software lives. So next, we're going to look at some creative automation. You see use cases during the pandemic, right? So this is us taking a look at some of the brands that we work with and anonymizing some of these things and also kind of doing some research in the market and just kind of synthesizing crystallizing this into kind of a few key challenges that we see that we're gonna talk about next. So first the challenge shifting brand campaigns towards e-commerce only activity. And if you look at these two kind of creatives here on the left, you'll have original brand creative, right? It's a little more general kind of high level brand awareness. And what people really need to see now is okay, maybe a little less high level brand awareness and brands need to focus a lot more on updating that creative.

So it's more product focus, right? Driving e-commerce activity, driving to a particular landing page to get that audience to lean in and actually shop online. So the solution here is a creative automation allows quick set up of new campaigns, reuse of assets, some strategies. And a lot of times that means going from one channel to another. So the ability to reuse these assets and then go from traditional paid media over to social like Facebook and Instagram, and then be able to update things incredibly efficiently, so important in before creative automation. This is something that is done in a very manual environment where let's just say, you are at the end of this kind of building process. You've launched this brand creative. And then all of a sudden you're like, Oh my goodness, like we're closing our stores and we're not driving to kind of the store.

We don't want to just drive to the website. We want to drive to individual products. Let's change messaging, and typically needs to go back to the beginning of that design process. So with creative automation, you do not need to do that. You're able to simply change messaging pretty quickly on the fly and then push out the new creatives, which is amazing. Next we're gonna talk about the immediate

change of creative messaging at all, live creatives. So something here you look at the creative, I think a lot of us will be familiar with this one on the left, the lifestyle creative, you know wasn't too, too long ago in terms of time, but it feels like five years ago that I was riding the subway to work and I'm hanging on to the strap and you know, on my way to the office.

But now obviously we're not doing that anymore. You know, we're all kind of working remote. So to be able to go from that kind of lifestyle, creative to a more updated studio, creative and kind of what that looks like, you're able to do that seamlessly on the fly with creative automation as well, because it allows for those real time adjustments of any creative elements at any point in time. So I think one cool thing to kind of call out here is the batch editing of creatives. So you're able to do automated updates are available instantly live on social platforms and edit across hundreds of different Facebook and Instagram ads can be implemented as quickly as within a couple of hours. So if you can imagine you have this lifestyle creative, all of a sudden things change pretty quickly. Within a matter of hours, you're able to pivot change messaging, change imagery, change CTA, basically change the entire vibe and intent of this creative, and then really push that into the social channels out into the market to capture that new audience.

And here's the next one, the challenge quickly in the library of new templates and designs that can be used proactively in multiple markets. So this is something that we think about a lot. We hear a lot from our clients going global to local. They have a global team and they have regional markets and typically very challenging to take those kinds of global assets and then make them work for a local environment, changing, you know market specific languages you know, copy needs to change depending on the market as well, super challenging. So with creative automation, you're able to set up super agile and flexible creative templates for all these different various scenarios that can scale globally simply by enabling local customization, customization of key layers, right? It really separates content from design and allows business stakeholders, copywriters and marketers to live inside of a content feed and make those changes really quickly and then activate those new creative templates by simply kind of engaging what we have production wizard, which allows you to kind of bake all these things seamlessly by putting them different marketer teams, specific details and going alive, and typically shaves 80% time off a typical timeline for creative life cycle.

And then finally a campaign is on whole due to inappropriate content and toolkits designed for market reality different than it is today. Right? So the solution here is adjusting creative concepts, altering the master templates and swapping out content in order to reflect the changes that can be done instantaneously. So on the left, you have the original brand creative and on the rights you have updated product creative. Again, you know, this can be done with video. This can be done with static imagery, but kind of adding new use cases and templates to support the new messages. So changing that content as well as the creative direction, which can be done in a couple of days and then change those original kind of templates that you've built instead of the platform can also be accomplished incredibly efficiently.

Let's look at a couple of automation success stories here. First, we're going to start with Spotify. So Spotify was previously building manually, one by one, all the different thousands of creatives that they need to satisfy their current content demands for different audiences, sizes, markets, and channels. And with creative automation, they're able to produce more than ever before, while simultaneously saving time, allowing for more innovation and ideation. So they're a great partner of ours and kind of looking at these crystallized numbers from Spotify, there will produce four X more content and also do it in half the time, right? So pretty amazing numbers. And you think about the kind of global scale that they have. You know, a lot of their campaigns are 5,000 plus creative permeatations, you know, for an individual campaign. And you can imagine that is a crazy amount of man hours kind of before creative automation that would go into building these one by one by one.

And next we'll talk Adidas and Celtra. So Adidas wanted flexible templates that were very easily used for localization. Something that they were challenged with before and with the introduction of creative automation going global to local is easier than ever before saving them a lot of man hours and saving them a lot of money time as well, and enabling them to produce hundreds of localized variants. Utilizing a global toolkit within those different local markets could then kind of lean in, in just leverage automation to build out these different variants that were needed to kind of satisfy the different languages, the different markets and messaging that needed to be accomplished for these different kinds of creative briefs.

So next, we're going to take a look at creative automation in action. And here we just have a quick video that we can show everyone.

That is my presentation for today. I think we have plenty of time for questions and answers.

Q&A

Q: HOW Design Online Attendees for Digital Session – read by Amy Conover, HOW Show Director

A: Andrew Slater

Amy

I like this summation of letting computers do what computers do that do best and letting designers do what designers do best. So along that line, here is a question - how does the automation benefit creativity and will this take away jobs from designers?

Andrew

Yeah, that's a great question. It's a scary question. I know you know, designers, it was a lot of times I think we'll think, well, you know, computers are gonna take away our jobs. They're going to do everything you mean, absolutely not, no designers. This is giving you super powers, right? So when you think you go from building that original, amazing template that you've perfected, you know, and then you have to build all these different permutations to satisfy that campaign brief from localization to changing copy, to satisfy all the different audiences and the channels and sizes kind of sky's the limit in terms of scaling dimensions, think about not having to spend nearly as much time doing that and being able to spend more time on kind of ideation innovation, kind of creating that next award winning idea. So this is, this is purpose built by designers and marketers at Celtra for designers and marketers, you know, at, in house teams at brands to enable them to scale exponentially far easier than ever before. So this is, this is purpose built for designers. We love designers,

But the answer, no, because that's complete sense. And you know, when we all are in a place where we can do what we do best everyone benefits. So let's see, let me check out some questions from our friends. Let's see, what are the top benefits of automating creative production

Efficiency, you know, I think we're all about efficiency and kind of one of the core themes that we have been seeing and talking with a lot of the brands recently is that brands are all thinking about automation, right? So creative automation is definitely a new category that we have come up with and, you know, we love it, but again, it's a new category and what we have seen from the vast majority of the brands that we were talking to is they are thinking about automation as well. So they want to automate all of these kind of mundane manual tasks to allow kind of much more free time for these in house teams to spend thinking about cooler, you know, much more fun things than just building all these permutations. So efficiency is kind of top of mind. And with efficiency, you know, you're, you're talking

about saving man hours, you're saving a ton of time when it comes to kind of building out these different permutations. You are kind of able to move with the speed of culture as well. So, you know, being able to move things on the fly and change messaging on the fly, something that's typically, you know, very challenging kind of when you're building a legacy kind of offline design tool, which are amazing, kind of still the core of everything. But they're not as flexible in terms of changing everything once they're in a digital environment. So being able to move at the speed of culture and changed messaging as needed and what appropriate kind of creative automation really helps you kind of tackle some of these really core challenges that we see brands go through a lot today.

Amy

We have another one - In terms of process, if you have a small team and a smaller brand, maybe one market or in one designer, how can this platform be used for collaboration?

Andrew

Yeah, absolutely. So, you know, while it is enterprise software, totally get that you know, we support teams of all sizes. So you know, we have some teams that are two or three marketers and designers on the platform all the way up to a hundred designers and marketers on the platform. But it's all about collaboration. It's all about speed. So even if you have a small team, you're probably not working right next to each other anymore, you are still working in different parts of the country, parts of the same city, but it's super challenging to be able to collaborate. So kind of the fact that we've separated kind of content from design and enables designers to kind of handle the design piece, right, coming up with original great ideas, setting them in the platform as a form of a template, and then lets the marketer kind of take over and then kind of create permutations based on different messages and kind of create those different variants that would be needed for kind of the campaign brief that they had in mind. So you know, it's really for teams of all sizes.

Amy

Cool. Is the video you showed us available online somewhere if we wanted to share it with others?

Andrew

Absolutely. Yeah. And I know when I know it goes by rather quickly and I wasn't gonna try and explain everything that was happening in there because it's basically some, you know, someone building the platform at like five X the speed, but yes, we do have those available on Celtra.com where both on the main landing page there's a great video and also on the creative automation landing page there are also some other videos and just, you know, really breaks things down from Celtra's kind of standpoint on how creative automation works kind of specifically to Celtra and kind of how we separate the pieces in the platform to kind of have it make total sense to anyone that is new to creative automation and building in this way and thinking about it this way.

Amy

Okay. I have a question here from Tracy, Is this software in place of Adobe products?

Andrew

We love Adobe. So no, this is definitely not in place of. This is complimentary too, so I think Adobe is typically, or, you know even more specifically Photoshop or just the kind of Adobe Creative Suite is

where we see designers kind of building those initial storyboards, those initial PSDs setting up, you know, their layout and layers and taxonomy that is needed to then go into a digital environment. And simply in Celtra, you are able to go from an offline design tool in Celtra, respecting the original layout of the original layers and taxonomy that is, you know, super unique to every individual brand. So what we enable you to do is go from offline into Celtra, which is cloud based and then kind of connect that template that you've built to a content feed, which essentially a CSV that lives in our software and then build out all those permutations, not by kind of building them one by one in design software, but building them in a content feed and then having that kind of robust ad builder, bake everything together, saving you a ton of time. So we love Adobe for sure. It's not meant to kind of transplant that. It's totally complimentary.

Amy

I think we have we've got time for one more question. This is from Glen. When you talk about the Celtra cost structure, is it by stage by campaign, et cetera? I'm guessing you can talk about that. Andrew.

Andrew

I can talk about this for sure. These questions always come up. So it's enterprise software, it's based on an annual license. It is not by seat. We want to encourage collaboration. We want to encourage scale. We don't want to discourage it. So as many people as you want to have in the platform, we love that because it means you're finding value. So we really sit on the creative production side. So we are not tapping into any of your media costs. We don't play in the media world. We are for designers and marketers to scale up exponentially those creatives. So we really focus on campaigns being a metric. So the number of campaigns you're going to run over the course of a year or folders or projects, if you will, some brands kind of define them and then all the different creative variants that live underneath those different campaigns. So we're focused on those two things, campaigns being a metric and create a variance, being a metric. So simply throughput from the software is kind of where we live in terms of cost structure.

Amy

Okay. Andrew, can we just do it a couple more? I've got a couple more good ones here. Now this is from Eric on this platform, seems like it's created with designers, which is great. Can you talk more about how the process gets started as a marketer? This feels like an incredible platform, but I'm wondering if you could speak more about the way the actual process gets started?

Andrew

Yeah, sure. So the process is typically started by a designer by the design team. So let's say you started in an offline design tool, like the Adobe Creative Suite, and then you bring that kind of template. And this Celtra, and what that designer is going to do is kind of finish their animations, finished the layers. And you know, Celtra is also pretty robust kind of animation tool as well. So you're going to lock in those different animations. You're gonna lock in those layers and then you're going to tie that kind of to a content feed and you able to set different layers that you want to be static and not be changed by a content feed in there. You're also able to collect the different layers and components that live inside that template that you want to change dynamically by a content feed. So typically once that designer's finished and that design is approved and it's ready to go to the next level.

What we've seen a lot of times is that marketers are the ones that are going to be living inside of that content feed, which is like an Excel sheet, like a CSV kind of marketer, super comfortable living in that

world. Designers usually see that and they're like, we're good. We don't want to work in the Excel. What, let the marketers do it? This is great. So at that point it kind of leaves it up to the design to the marketer to really dive into that content feed and then figure out exactly the messaging and different permutations. They want to create kind of a row by row by row. So you can imagine each layer that you want to be dynamic and informed by a content feed is then going to be kind of a column in this content feed. So it's super cool. So you have different CTA column.

You'll have a column for headline, you'll have a column for copy to a, you know, a column for language. And that is where the is going to live and start writing in all the different copy, selecting the different product shots that they're able to simply drag and drop into that content feed really acts as a repository for kind of every single permutation that you're looking to build. And then kind of what's, that's all baked and built. You're able to preview them all in one fell swoop. So inside of our software, we built what we call a campaign explorer. So every single permutation for every size, for every channel, you'll be able to review inside the platform, including the animations, which is super powerful. And from a collaboration standpoint, we have built this really cool, intuitive commenting feature that feels very native. And everyone's very familiar with using re simply tag people inside the platform.

So if a designer wanted to have a particular ad look that they can actually annotate inside an individual ad, they can tag maybe their manager, or maybe someone that's a business stakeholder on the marketing team, call out the specific things they're going to get tagged inside the platform. They're going to get an email as well. That brings them into that individual creative. Once everything is kind of approved, then it's on to distribution. So we have API integrations with kind of the usual suspects of the social world. So Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat. So we built those APIs to kind of push into your business instance, kind of have those different digital channels. And then we could have done the same for programmatic paid media. There's an API integration with Google and different best of breed kind of programmatic technologies. And then simply you can export and download all of them. So you can zip up all those creatives, a different image files, or if you were running a bunch of scaled up videos, download, download them all as MP4 for kind of distribution on any single kind of a channel you could think of. So that's kind of my, my fast kind of a workflow, but that's really in a nutshell, it's a pretty simple workflow.

Amy

It sounds simple. And you know, what I love about pretty much everything we spoke is that it does allow everyone to kind of stay in their area of expertise, but then there's this incredible opportunity to collaborate. And I think especially now in this reality of remote work it just makes so much sense. Well, we have one more question. I get so caught up in listening to the answer. I need to give me a minute. Let me look for the question. So let's do this one last one for Dorothy. Are you still able to fix my new things like kerning and will that change each ad or would you have to fix things individually? More of a detail question.

Andrew

That's a good question. So that's all going to live inside of the content feed. We've had copywriters in mind since day one. So yes, you were able to kind of fix individual last minute, minute things like that, kind of a one by one way. So the cool thing about kind of this creative production is that once you have built all of them and you're looking at every single permutation you built inside of the campaign Explorer, kind of in a live environment, you can then go and pick individual creatives that you want to dive into because maybe you just want to get that pixel perfect. And you're like, you know what, I need to move this around and be able to move those individual elements around. So both kind of product

shots, you know, and imagery you're able to change and move. You're also able to kind of dive in and fix things like kerning on an individual level, but we've also implemented them at kind of like the top level inside of the content feed with copywriters in mind.

So instituting kind of the line breaks on breakable lines to make sure that core messaging kind of across languages is always respected. So that brand is getting their unique selling proposition across and copywriters. Don't have to then go in individually to every single creative in every single chart and size and change things, which we know is a huge, huge time suck. So that is a good, that is a great question. And yes, you know, we're all about kind of speed all about collaboration, all about efficiency. So yes, we've taken a lot of these things kind of to heart when we thought about building the software.

Amy

Awesome. This has been so informative and you have shared so much information in a short period of time. Did you have any final remarks before we sign off?

Andrew

This has been great. You know, you so much for having me and allowing us to talk about this stuff we love. We love brands, you know, we're consumers as you know, as well as a software company. So being able to kind of present to this audience is super cool. If anyone wants to get in touch with me directly or get in touch with Celtra, you can reach to me individually, you know, happy to have a conversation with anyone that was here today, for sure.