

hellokindred

CMO ***talent playbook***

Creative capability in
a new era



Marketing leaders today are under relentless pressure to scale globally, personalise locally *and deliver measurable results at breakneck speed.*



Agile transformations can deliver 30% gains in efficiency, customer satisfaction, employee engagement and operational performance.
– McKinsey

But old models – siloed workflows, internal teams stretched to the limit, relying on the same skillsets as five, 10, even 20 years ago – just can't keep up.

HelloKindred helps CMOs rethink the model to meet constantly changing needs by embedding creative talent that moves faster, integrates better and delivers more.

One global financial markets provider – serving over 44,000 customers in more than 170 countries – used our approach to set a new benchmark for creative agility, cutting costs by 200% and increasing output by half.



Only 24% of CMOs had the budget to execute their 2024 strategy.
– Gartner

The problem:

Complexity, cost and capability gaps

It's becoming increasingly clear that squeezed CMOs are having to do more with less. From financial services to B2B tech, the reality is:



Teams are working in silos while handoffs between internal and agency staff slow everything down



Strategic direction and brand execution are often fundamentally out of sync



Budgets are ballooning while impact shrinks



Organisations are over-reliant on production but underinvest in insight



Creative talent shortages, especially in niche, fast-moving and emerging areas

Something's got to change.



Marketing budgets dropped **15% YoY** from 2023-2024. – [Gartner](#)

How to use this playbook

This playbook is a strategic tool for CMOs and marketing leaders rethinking how marketing gets done. Use it to:

- 01 **Diagnose your operating model** – are your creative workflows aligned with business processes or scattered across silos?
- 02 **Benchmark your setup** – assess how your delivery models compares with high-performing enterprise teams.
- 03 **Bring everyone on board** – use clear, outcome-focused language to align stakeholders across procurement, HR and the C-suite.
- 04 **Spot the gaps** – identify where embedded talent, agile workflows or regional hubs could unlock value.
- 05 **Shape your roadmap** – whether you're building a Centre of Excellence or shifting away from agencies, design each play to flex with your maturity and market needs.

This isn't a rigid framework. It's a foundation for marketing that moves at the speed of business.



The five plays:

What leading
CMOs are doing
differently

THE FIVE PLAYS:
WHAT LEADING
CMOs ARE DOING
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PLAY 1

Build a Centre of Excellence, not a patchwork

Fragmented creative teams slow everything down. Leading CMOs are consolidating capabilities into Centres of Excellence – streamlined, scalable hubs that deliver real impact. One UK-based financial client partnered with HelloKindred to embed a 14-person creative team in South Africa:



Integrated across global time zones, platforms and business units



Built a scalable, future-ready model for expansion across events, analytics and more



Dramatically reduced creative costs and doubled efficiency

Creative doesn't need more layers. It needs focus, flow and freedom to scale.



Marketing Centres of Excellence can up ROI by 15–25%. – McKinsey



PLAY 2

Treat creativity like infrastructure – built for scale

Creativity isn't a project – it's a system. Treat it as such. Leading teams are moving away from one-off assets toward structured, scalable creative delivery.



Agile workflows that flex and adapt



Design systems and creative toolkits to make great work, faster



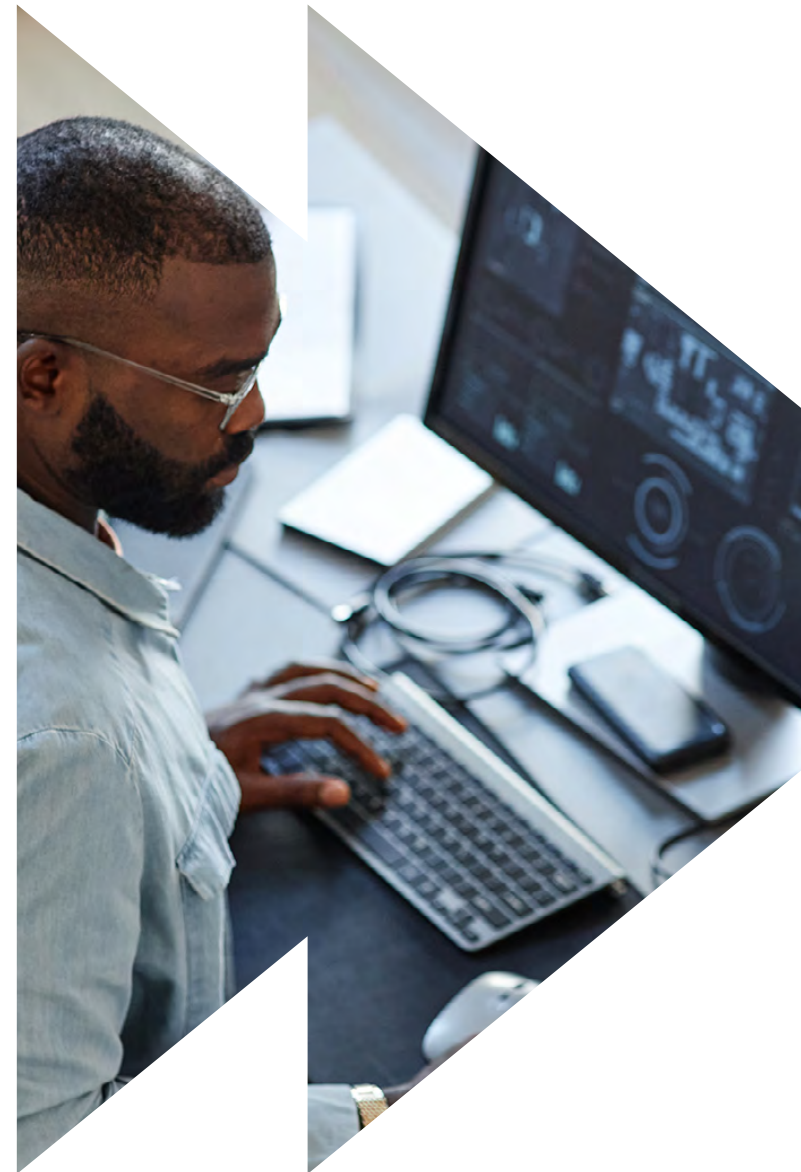
Processes optimised for repeatability, not reinvention

As one client put it when their campaign speed nearly doubled after rollout: "We made creativity user-friendly – not just beautiful."



*Creative ops platforms make teams up to **426% more successful**. – [Lytho](#)*

- PLAY 2



PLAY 3

Bring creative in-house, minus the overhead

Top CMOs are embedding creative talent directly into their teams, cutting the handoffs, delays and disconnects that can come with traditional outsourcing. With HelloKindred, organisations have unlocked:



Talent deployed in as little as 72 hours



Surge capacity during peak demand



Creative accountability tied directly to business outcomes

**Creative excellence isn't a service anymore.
It's a strategic advantage.**



*Internal agencies deliver assets **25% faster.***
– Association of National Advertisers (ANA)



PLAY 4

Build talent that moves with your customer

In a world where customer journeys change by the day, the old talent models don't hold up anymore. Leading brands are shifting to:



Cross-functional talent fluent in data, design and demand



AI-literate creatives who are insight-driven and outcome-oriented



Agile teams that flex with evolving customer needs, not rigid silos

As one CMO commented:
"It's not about more people – it's about the right mindset."



*Agile marketing increases **ROI by 40%**.*
– TechFunnel



PLAY 5

Adapt your model... or fall behind

From North America to EMEA, CMOs are shifting to embedded creative models because they:



Deliver flexibility without ceding control



Unlock niche expertise at speed



Build strategic continuity across markets

Offshore isn't just about cost anymore. It's about capability, scalability and speed.



90% of companies offshore creative services.

– MXPiq

- PLAY 5



HelloKindred's playbook pillars:

How leading CMOs build for scale

01

Embed ownership

- Don't rent talent – integrate it
- Build embedded teams, not just freelance briefs.

02

Build flex into the system

- Speed starts with structure
- Standardise assets; decentralise access.

03

Think global, hire local

- Unlock value with near-shore creative hubs
- Choose locations aligned to your market footprint.

04

Prioritise strategic buy-in

- Creativity is a growth function – not a nice-to-have.
- Secure executive sponsorship early on.

05

Focus on outcomes, not outputs

- Creative work should drive business results
- Align creative KPIs with commercial goals.

+

Companies with strong talent strategies see **2.2x more revenue and 1.5x more profit.**
– [AIHR](#)

HELLOKINDRED'S
PLAYBOOK PILLARS:
HOW LEADING
CMOS BUILD FOR
SCALE

Why leading brands choose hello**kindred**

Embedded talent – creative teams aligned to your business, your brand and your objectives.

Offshore capability – high-performance teams in Cape Town, Johannesburg and beyond.

Modular systems – designed for scale; built for speed.

B2B fluency – enterprise-ready talent with niche specialisations across industries.

Strategic integration – marketing delivery that's aligned with your commercial strategy from day one.

WHY LEADING
BRANDS CHOOSE
HELLOKINDRED

Connecting teams – and ambitions – to success

- If you're rethinking how your organisation scales content, campaigns and creative capability, we'd love to be a part of that.
- Let's talk about how HelloKindred can help you build a faster, smarter, more agile marketing engine – wherever you are.

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SCHEDULE A SHORT STRATEGY SESSION

VISIT OUR WEBSITE