mediagenix

What Media Companies Can Do to Become More Data-Driven, Automated, and Connected

Learnings From the 2024
Mediagenix Survey

55% of media organizations struggle to integrate data-driven decision-making, automation and connectivity effectively in their organization.

In May 2024, Mediagenix surveyed participants at its bi-annual M-Connect event. This event is structured around three main stages: **Strategic Planning** (strategic planning, budgeting, and evaluating future content), **Content Value Management** (optimizing the economic exploitation of content), and **Content Scheduling** (smart and efficient scheduling and publishing of content).

During the event, identical surveys were conducted for each stage to assess how mature organizations are in adopting strategies that are essential for any lean and smart organization today: 1) Implementing data-driven decision-making, 2) Automating tasks, and 3) Connecting systems and processes. Aggregating the maturity scores across all three stages and three strategies revealed that 17% of organizations scored the absolute minimum of '1: Sporadic' (on a 1 to 5 scale), while 38% scored a '2: Ad hoc'.

This means that 55% of organizations[1] still need to reach a structured, mature level in articulating and implementing strategies for data-driven decision-making, automating tasks, and connecting systems and processes.
This article will delve into the survey and its results, providing readers with detailed insights into the state of the industry, which will be valuable to anyone looking to make improvements.

1. Adding scores 17% for 'Sporadic' and 38% for 'Ad hoc'

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Diving into the data collected about data-driven decision-making, we see that 13% only sporadically apply data-driven decision-making and that 36% do so on an ad hoc basis.

How data-driven are your decision-making processes?
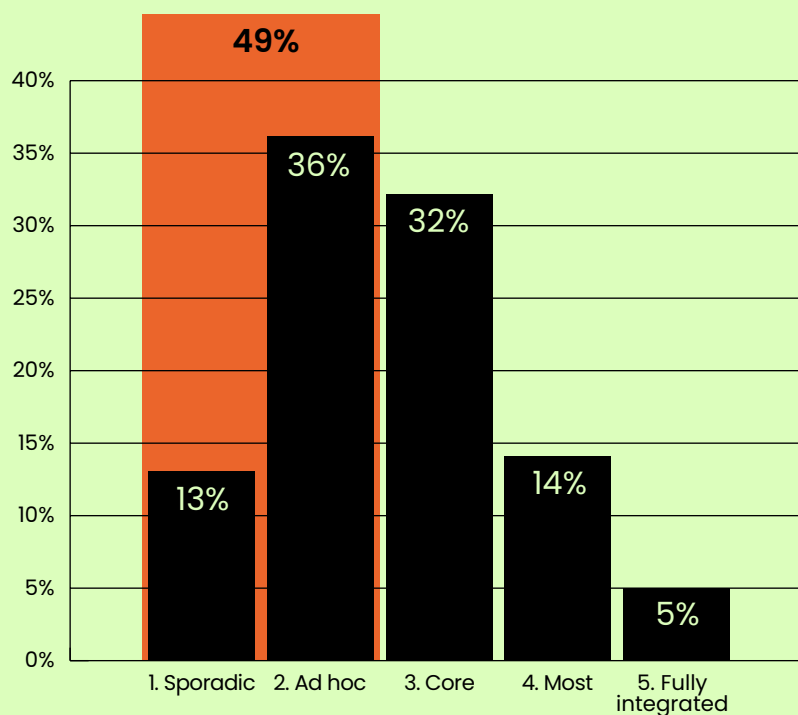
Average score = 2.6, Median score = 3

This effectively means that 49% of participants use data-driven decision-making quite poorly. 'Sporadic' and 'Ad hoc' indicate that little thought is given to strategies that utilize data efficiently and effectively.

Why does this matter? Successful companies inside and outside the media industry have embraced data-driven decision-making as a proven instrument to increase the speed and quality of decision-making. For media organizations, this means better and quicker decisions about what content to buy from whom, quickly identifying which content is least expensive to use for a new FAST channel launch, or deciding which slots are best suited for a new show.
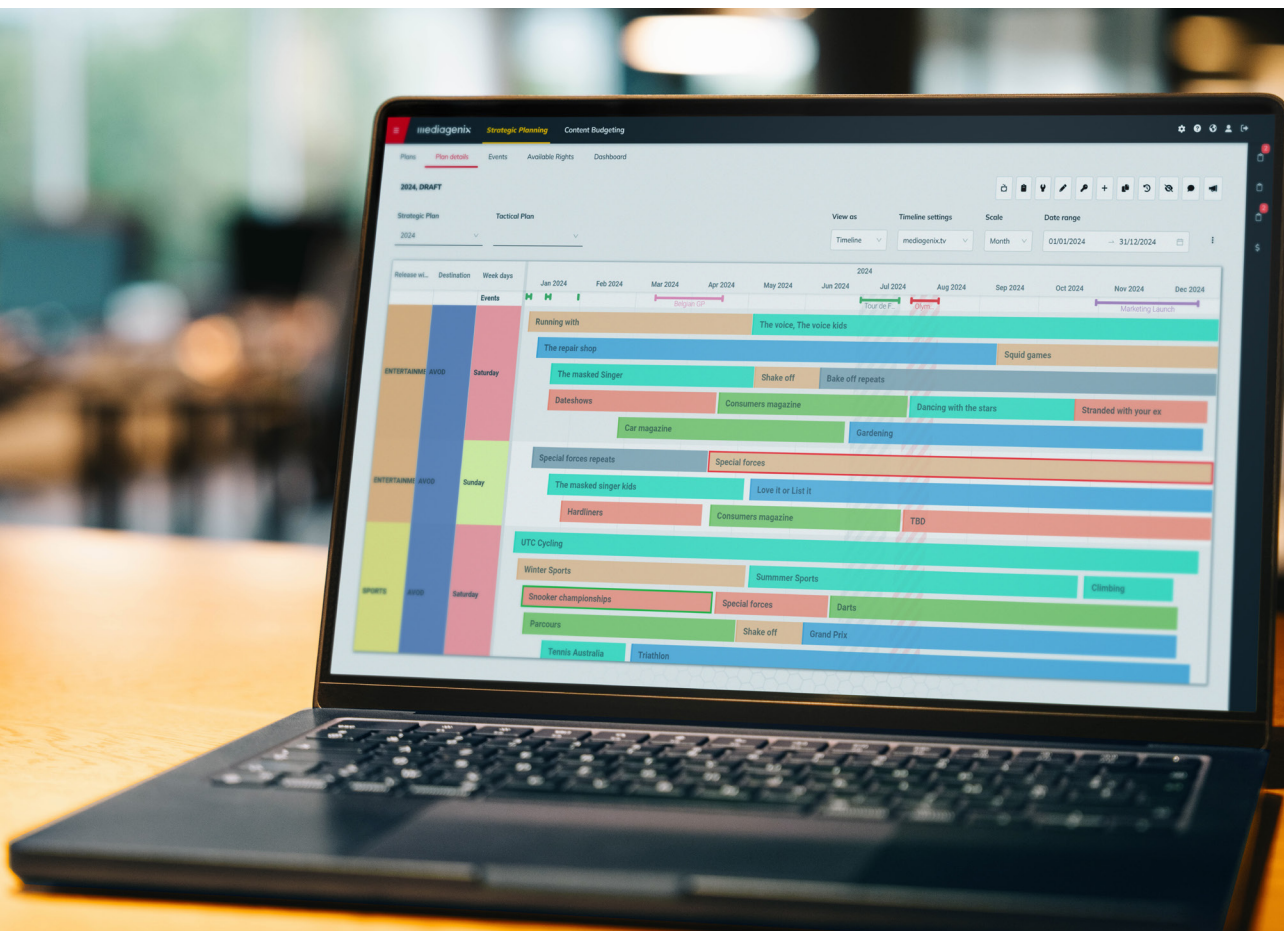
Automation

Another crucial area for media organizations on their journey to becoming leaner and smarter is the adoption of automation. The M-Connect survey revealed that a shocking 67% of participants ('Sporadic': 20% + 'Ad hoc': 47%) do not seem to have a policy for structural, systematic automation.

What level of Automation is applied in your processes?

Score	Percentage
67%	
1. Sporadic	20%
2. Ad hoc	47%
3. Core	21%
4. Most	9%
5. Fully integrated	2%
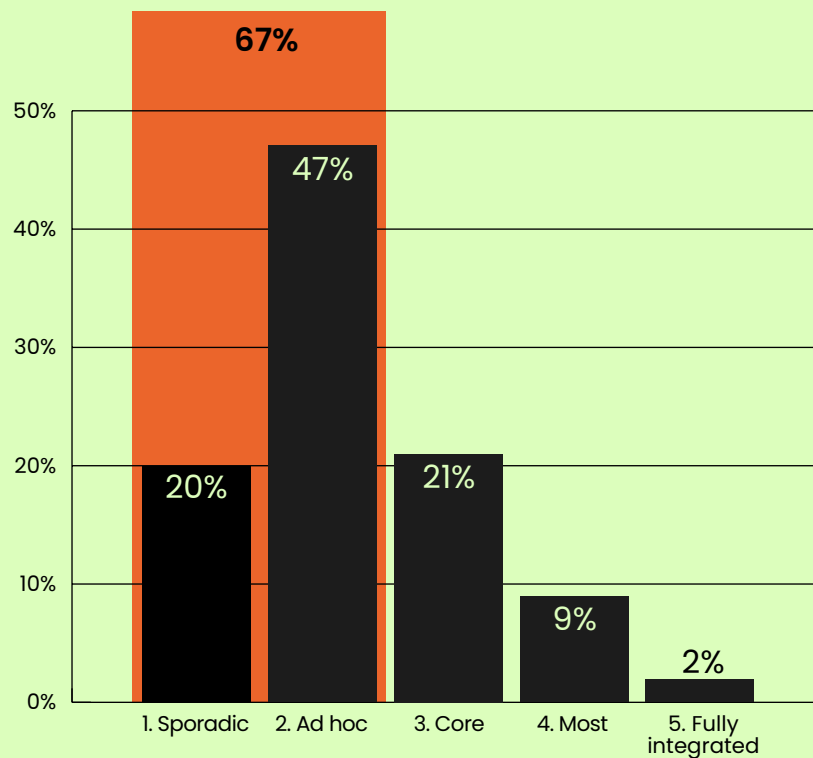
Average score = 2.3, Median score = 2

This also means that only 33% of participants[2] have a deliberate strategy to build automation into their core processes, have integrated automation in most of their processes, or have achieved full integration in all their processes, existing and new.

When media organizations fail to leverage the potential of automation, they miss out on benefits such as error prevention and faster processes. The benefits of automation shouldn't be underestimated, as it almost always leads to greater efficiency.
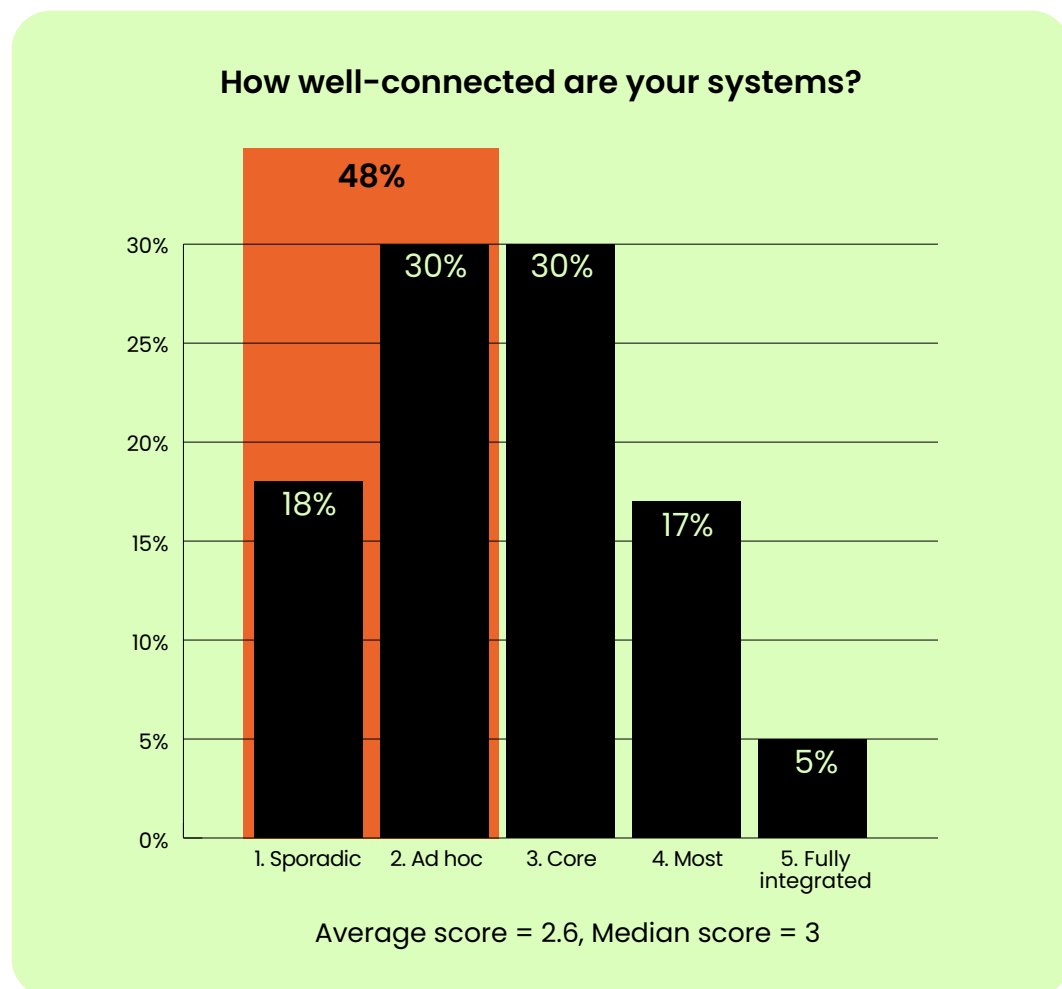
Automation also reduces errors and, therefore, the need for rework, ultimately leading to more efficient, uninterrupted, and stable processes.

2. Adding scores for 'Core' 21% + 'Most' 9% + 'Fully integrated' 2%

Connected

The third and last category surveyed at the M-Connect conference is 'Connectivity.' The participants were asked to score how well-connected the systems they use daily are.

How well-connected are your systems?

Score	Percentage
1. Sporadic	18% (48%)
2. Ad hoc	30%
3. Core	30%
4. Most	17%
5. Fully integrated	5%

Average score = 2.6, Median score = 3

Surprisingly, the survey revealed that 48% ('Sporadic' 18% + 'Ad hoc' 30%) have not systematically connected all the main applications they use on a day-to-day basis.
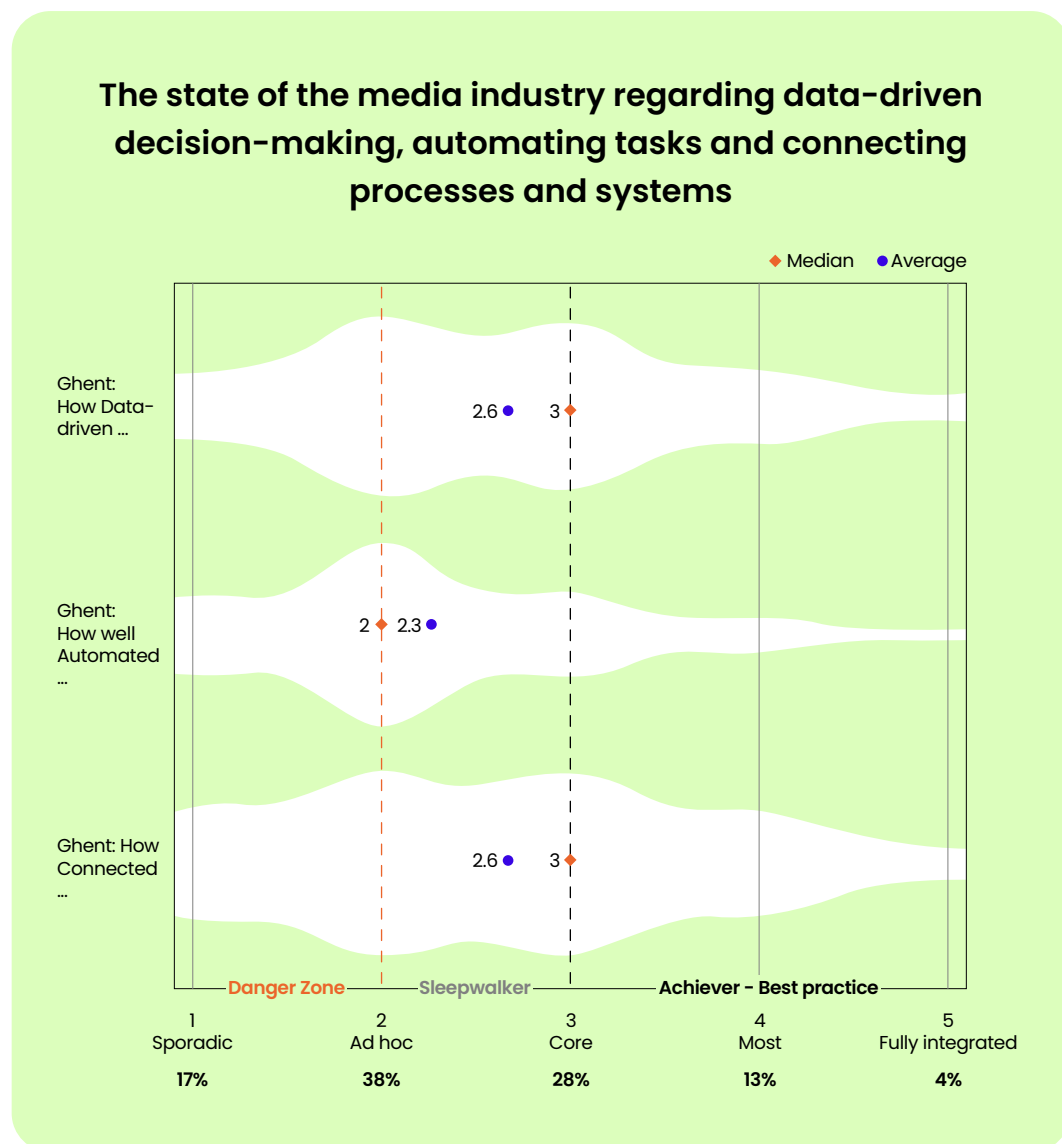
A meager 30% indicated ('Core') that they have connected specifically their core systems. Only 17% ('Most') seem to have a strategy to connect systems throughout the organization wherever possible, and only a very small group (5%, 'Fully integrated') have the strategic objective to build in full connectivity between all systems by design.

Connecting systems is crucial to enable processes and functions that use these systems to become more efficient and effective. One could say that connecting systems is the necessary foundation for many improvement initiatives and a precondition for streamlined and connected processes.

Almost half of the organizations haven't implemented connectivity between their core systems in a time of abundant APIs and cloud-based technology, which is concerning. This will hamper these organizations when they try to leverage their investments in these systems. If systems are not properly connected, success in today's connected world is unlikely.

Summary

Combining the indices for the three categories surveyed provides a good impression of the overall state of the industry.

The state of the media industry regarding data-driven decision-making, automating tasks and connecting processes and systems

◆ Median   ● Average

Ghent: How Data-driven ...   2.6 ●   3 ◆

Ghent: How well Automated ...   2 ◆   2.3 ●

Ghent: How Connected ...   2.6 ●   3 ◆

Danger Zone — **Sleepwalker** — **Achiever - Best practice**

1	2	3	4	5
Sporadic	Ad hoc	Core	Most	Fully integrated
17%	**38%**	**28%**	**13%**	**4%**

As we can see from the combined chart, none of the indices (average or median) indicate below 2 (Ad hoc) or above 3 (Core). What can we learn from this?

First, we see a substantial group of organizations **(17%)** that only work on improving data, automation, and connectivity **sporadically**, without a real explicit approach.

The next group represents the majority of organizations **(38%)** that apply an **ad hoc** approach to driving data-driven decision-making, automating tasks and processes, and connecting and integrating systems: they welcome individual projects but lack an overall approach.

The next biggest group **(28%)** adopted an approach to focus on improving **a selected set of core processes and systems**. They are selective in areas they are improving and may miss improvement opportunities as they are not aware of what more is possible.

Only a small group of organizations have a broad approach **('Most': 13%)** or a **clearly defined integrated strategy (4%)** to implement best practices. These organizations have a clear understanding of why and where they need to improve and organize themselves accordingly.

A closer look at the variation between the indices reveals that automation has the lowest scores overall. We have yet to determine the reason for this, as we haven't been able to follow up, but a possible explanation is that meaningful automation of more comprehensive tasks involves information or triggers from other processes and systems. This is difficult to achieve in an environment that is not yet connected and integrated.

Summarizing the findings from studying the combined chart, a relatively small portion of organizations are in the 'Danger Zone': they score low overall. They might not be aware of the risks and lost opportunities they encounter. The next group of organizations could be labeled 'Sleepwalkers': they have done work in all areas but lack a clear direction and/or sense of urgency on where to improve next.

Finally, there is the promised land of 'Achievers': these organizations know what the best practices are and are actively working on implementing them. Unfortunately, this group is currently very small (4%), but by sharing our insights and solutions, we hope to contribute to growing this group.

Closing Remarks

Unfortunately, due to limited space, we cannot present and analyze all the data we have available within the context of this article. However, we do want to provide you with a general overview that combines individual scores from each stage. We won't explain it in detail here, but if you find this interesting and would like to discuss, please contact us, and we will follow up with you.

| Stages (average scores)	Data-driven decision-making	Automating tasks	Connecting processes and systems
Content Strategy (CS)	2.5	2.2	2.3
Content Value Management (CVM)	2.7	2.4	2.8
Content Scheduling (cs)	2.6	2.1	2.7

Stage maturity per adoption strategy displaying average scores - tabular

Stages (median scores)	Data-driven decision-making	Automating tasks	Connecting processes and systems
Content Strategy (CS)	2	2	2
Content Value Management (CVM)	3	2	3
Content Scheduling (cs)	3	2	3

Stage maturity per adoption strategy displaying median scores - tabular
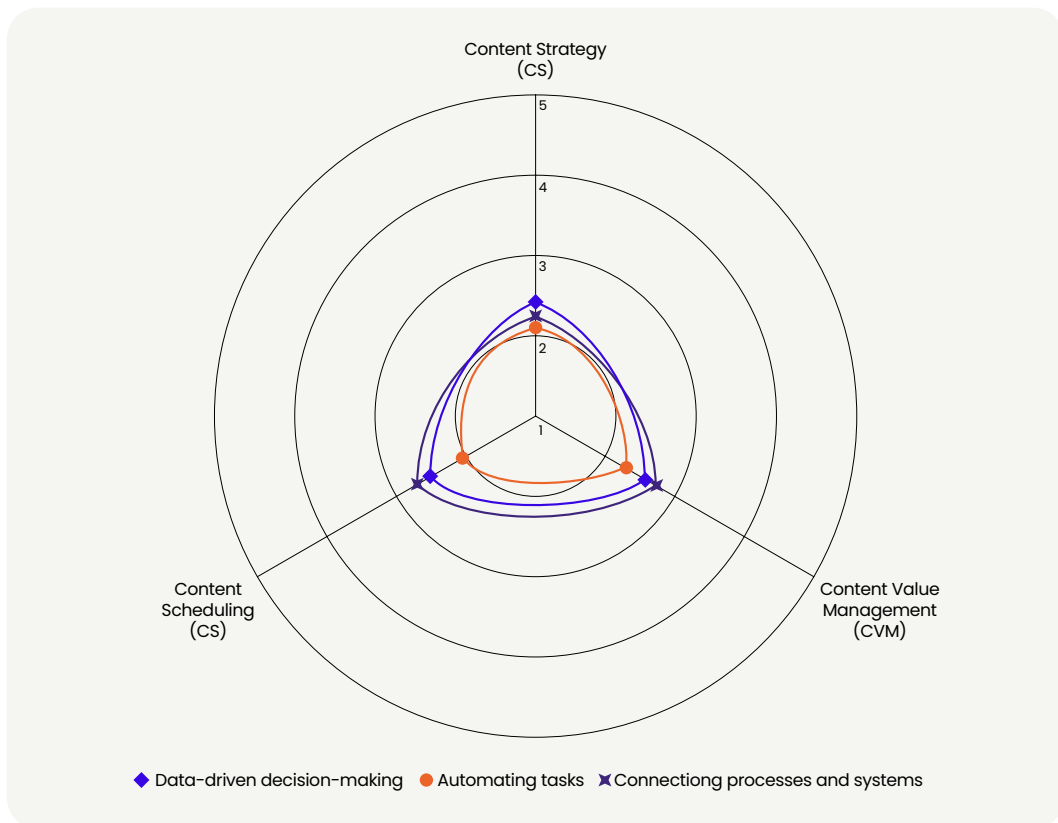
Stage maturity per adoption strategy displaying average scores - spider diagram
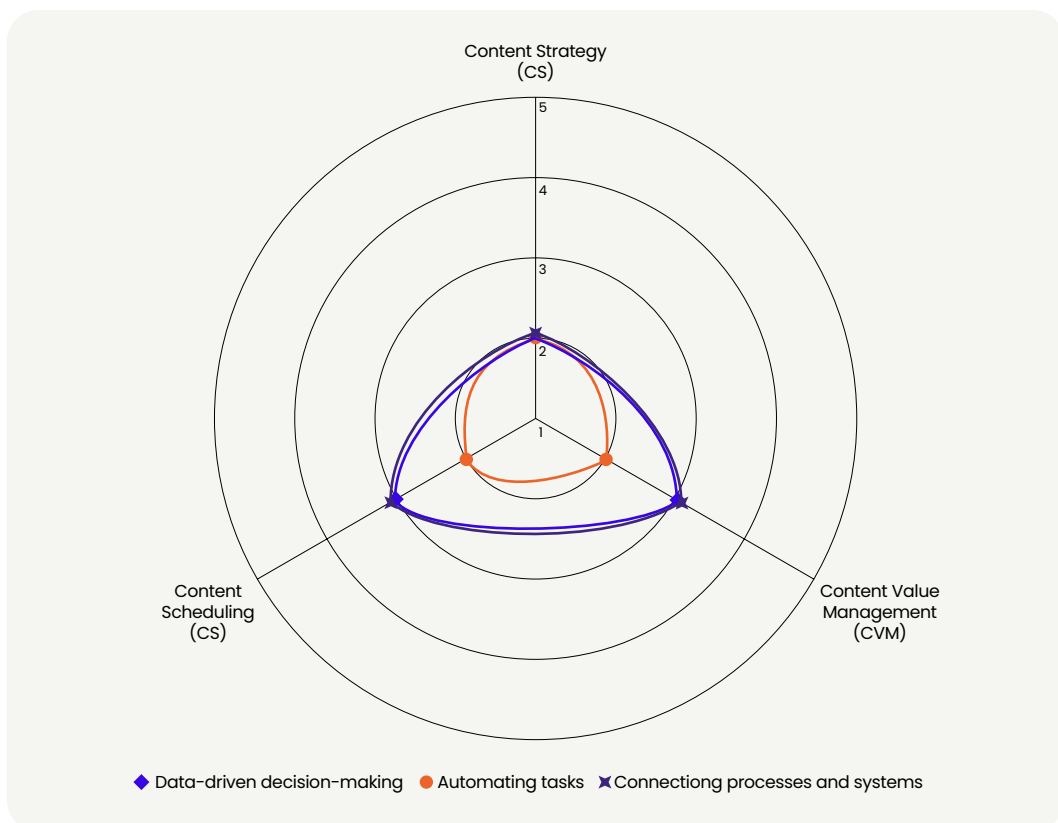
Stage maturity per adoption strategy displaying median scores - spider diagram

Mediagenix Pathways to Becoming More Data-Driven, Automated, and Connected

The Mediagenix M-Connect survey was conducted to better understand how mature media organizations are in the areas of data-driven decision-making, automating activities, and connecting systems and processes. Mediagenix strongly believes that these three factors together will allow media organizations to become leaner and smarter.

Mediagenix is committed to enhancing existing products, as well as launching new products that will help customers become leaner and smarter by improving the three areas surveyed:

- Becoming better at data-driven decision-making
- Automating activities where possible
- Connecting all relevant systems and processes

Strategic Planning

One of the new products that Mediagenix recently launched is called 'Strategic Planning.' This is a SaaS-based tool that seamlessly connects with existing Mediagenix products and allows you to implement a very effective and efficient strategic planning process for all your future planned and/or committed content and titles

The platform-agnostic tool allows you to plan, budget, track, and enhance titles while you release them to specific platforms/tools for detailed planning and handling through existing/traditional (Mediagenix) content scheduling tools.

Research based on Lean principles showed that a 31% efficiency improvement (reduced workload) is achievable. This is because the Strategic Planning tool greatly enhances and simplifies communication, removes the need for duplicate data entry, and avoids working on the wrong things at the wrong time.

Another benefit that Lean research revealed is the possibility of accelerating the overall throughput time for a title from onboarding to first TX (or 'sunrise') by 44%. For a sample customer, we have seen that the total time a title spends in the process could be reduced from 142 to 75 days. This was achieved predominantly by eliminating waiting times in the process. These waiting times (mostly with vendors and suppliers) can be reduced as a result of more accurate and better planning data in the Strategic Planning tool, which allows customers, suppliers, and vendors to have fewer 'buffers' in their SLAs that normally need to compensate for poor planning and poor data when this process is not optimally organized.

Content Value Management

Mediagenix recently launched 'Content Value Management', a suite of SaaS-based tools that seamlessly connect with other Mediagenix products and provide a range of functions to optimally manage and exploit content.

The suite offers a full, transparent and holistic view on content, enabling you to maximize its value by directly exploiting it on relevant platforms or by enhancing and preparing it for exploitation on more or alternative platforms.

One core function of the suite is to plan, order, and coordinate the delivery of all constituent parts of a production, such as descriptive metadata, subtitles, ratings, artwork, compliance edits, etc. Content Value Management excels at ensuring that all these elements are delivered at the right time, on the right platform, and at the right quality and cost.

Lean research has also been conducted on Content Value Management to explore how and where it can help media organizations improve. The research indicated that in some scenarios, a 60% efficiency improvement is possible.

In one specific scenario, a sample client running seven different workflows (such as ordering subtitles, curative metadata, ratings, artwork, compliance edits, etc.) for various purposes could consolidate most steps into one generic workflow. This workflow utilizes a central, shared repository and intuitive ordering tools and templates, resulting in a 60% efficiency gain.

Other possible improvements from using Content Value Management include reducing the need for rush jobs. When materials are not ordered on time or poor data is used, costs can increase due to rush charges, which are often significantly higher than standard rates. At our sample organization, we found that 15% of orders incurred rush charges, which we could reduce to 5%.

A unique benefit that we found exploring Content Value Management suite capabilities is that it brings together all core and related information about the content you own and operate, providing a unified, holistic view of your content and its state. This significantly reduces the amount of time people spend searching for information.

Market research by Coveo showed that in media organizations, people can spend up to 40% of their time searching and locating the data they need to perform their work. Although we have yet to quantify how much we could reduce this number for Content Value Management users, we are confident that we can significantly lower it.

Continuous Improvement

Mediagenix is committed to continuously improving its products to help customers constantly enhance their business processes. To achieve this, maximum interaction between Mediagenix and its customers is desirable. That is why events such as the (bi-annual) M-Connect event are organized in addition to regular interactions.

Mediagenix works with industry experts to conduct research to identify where and how operational and business processes along the media supply chain could be improved. Lean Six Sigma principles are used to guide this research and quantify expected benefits.

The research initiatives lead to white papers describing expected benefits from (system/process) improvements and best practices to realize those benefits iteratively.

Mediagenix customers can benefit from applying the insights from these white papers to drive continuous improvements in their organizations. Collectively, these improvements will lead to better scores/performance in being data-driven, automating processes, and having better connected systems and processes.

A selection of available white papers:
- Beyond the Bottlenecks: Streamlining Strategic Planning
- From Waste to Value: The Benefits of Enhancing Content Value Management
- Lean Six Sigma for Media Organizations

About

The Survey Design

Every other year, Mediagenix hosts M-Connect, an extensive, multi-day user conference to engage with its customers from around the world. During the conference, feedback is collected about current Mediagenix products, followed by intense sessions to collaboratively identify trends and developments relevant for future Mediagenix solutions and products.

Customer representatives from all over the world attend M-Connect. This year's location (May 23-24) was Ghent, Belgium. Attendees represent a wide range of organizational levels, from junior graphics editors to company COOs and CTOs.

During M-Connect, attendees are surveyed on how automated, connected and data-driven their media supply chain processes are today.

The number of participants surveyed varied between 46 and 77. The survey consisted of a set of three questions (how automated, how connected, and how data-driven are you?). These questions were asked for each area for which Mediagenix provides solutions (Strategic Planning, Content Value Management, and Content Scheduling).

The following table was used to instruct participants before each session. As the event was structured around the three main solution areas (Strategic Planning, Content Value Management, and Content Scheduling), the survey was conducted three times (using Mentimeter as an interactive survey tool), and the instruction was repeated at the start of every session.

How data-driven, automated and connected is your organization?					
Score ▶ Question ▼	1. Sporadic	2. Ad hoc	3. Core	4. Most	5. Fully Integrated in everything we do
How data-driven is …?	Data used when needed	Used for some specific use cases	In place for core use cases	Proactive, use of data is standard practice	Every activity is data-driven (by design)
How automated is …?	No systematic approach to automation	Some automation for immediate gains	Automation implemented in key activities	Automation is well understood and widely used	Automation is the starting point for any newly designed or revisited activity
How connected are …?	Systems are connected as afterthought	Some systems connected, some are not	Most important systems connected	End to end connection of most systems	Connectivity is integral part of (new) system design

This Article

This article aims to report on the survey results gathered during M-Connect 2024 in Ghent and to formulate recommendations for the industry on how to become more data-driven, more automated, and better connected.

Mediagenix[3]

We are the trusted partner for media companies. We optimize business operations. And boost growth. Throughout the entire content lifecycle. We develop smart content solutions. To strategize. Manage. Engage. All around one source of truth: our software. The result? Constantly shaping future transformations.

3. From Mediagenix website

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