

Executive Summary: Bridging the Creative Gap

The digital advertising landscape has reached a critical inflection point. While global digital ad spending surges to **\$650 million in 2026** with retail commanding 22-23% market share. Small and Medium-sized Businesses (SMBs) face an increasingly complex paradox: they possess sophisticated in-house campaign management capabilities but lack the creative firepower to compete effectively in an oversaturated content environment.

The Challenge:

SMB retailers are managing their own campaigns: handling bidding strategies, lead generation, and performance reporting. **42% cite content oversaturation as their primary challenge**, and **56% struggle to attribute ROI due to poor content quality**. The creative bottleneck has emerged as the single greatest barrier to converting advertising spend into measurable business outcomes.

The Sutherland Solution:

Our Creative-as-a-Service (CaaS) offering provides high-velocity, performance-driven ad content creation (static imagery, video, and copy) specifically designed for SMB retailers who manage campaign execution in-house.

Value Proposition:



Speed to Market

48-72 hour turnaround on standard ad assets through AI-powered workflows



Cost Efficiency

60-70% reduction in creative costs versus traditional agency models



Performance Focus

Content engineered specifically for Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) improvement across Meta, TikTok, Google Display, and emerging retail media networks



The Problem: **Content Quality as the Critical Bottleneck**

Despite strong in-house campaign management capabilities, SMB retailers continue to face persistent creative execution challenges that limit performance and scalability:

1. Measurement and Attribution Crisis

- **42% of marketers** identify content oversaturation as the primary hurdle to standing out
- **57% of marketers** consider creating high-quality content their biggest operational challenge

2. Resource Constraints

- **39% of B2B marketers** cite resource constraints (time, people, budget) as a top-3 challenge
- **45% of B2B marketers** lack scalable content creation models



The SMB Retail Challenge: **Why Content Remains the Bottleneck**

SMB retailers have matured in media buying and campaign management, but creative production has not evolved at the same pace. As platform complexity increases and content velocity expectations rise, creative execution becomes the limiting factor preventing scalable growth.

The High Cost of Creative Agencies

Traditional agency models are fundamentally built for large enterprise clients, not agile SMB retailers. High retainers, rigid scopes, and slow production cycles create a cost structure and operational burden that often outweigh the value delivered.

For SMBs with modest monthly ad budgets, creative costs frequently consume a disproportionate share of media spend, reducing efficiency, limiting testing capacity, and slowing time-to-market during critical promotional windows.

Pricing Mismatch:

- Retainer models require \$10,000-25,000 monthly minimums
- Project-based pricing averages \$5,000-8,000 per campaign
- Revision cycles billed at \$150-300/hour
- SMB average monthly ad spend: \$8,000-15,000 (creative costs often exceed 40% of media budget)

Operational Friction:

- 2-3 week lead times incompatible with retail promotional calendars
- Account management overhead adds 30-40% to production costs
- Strategic planning requirements force services SMBs don't need
- Minimum order quantities (typically 20+ assets) create waste



Inability to Scale Multi-channel Content

Modern retail advertising demands platform-native creative tailored to each channel's format, algorithm, and user behavior. What performs on TikTok rarely translates directly to Meta, Google Display, or retail media networks.

Without a scalable system for producing and adapting assets across formats, SMB retailers struggle to maintain consistency, velocity, and performance, leaving engagement, conversion rates, and ROAS on the table.

Format Complexity:

- **TikTok:** Vertical video (9:16), authentic user-generated aesthetic, 15-60 seconds
- **Instagram Reels:** Vertical video with text overlays, trending audio integration
- **Meta Feed:** Square (1:1) and horizontal (16:9) static and video, carousel support
- **Google Display:** 15+ size specifications from 300×250 to 970×250
- **YouTube Shorts:** Vertical short-form optimized for discovery algorithms
- **Retail Media Networks:** Product-centric imagery adhering to platform guidelines

Performance Impact:

- Campaigns with platform-optimized creative achieve **2.3x higher engagement rates**
- Video content drives **49% faster revenue growth** than static imagery
- Brands producing fresh creative weekly see **3.5x higher conversion rates** than monthly refreshers



The Sutherland Solution: **Content-only Model for Maximum Impact**

Sutherland's Creative-as-a-Service offering represents a fundamental reimagining of the creative production relationship:

We Provide:

The "Assets"

- High-quality static imagery (all platform formats)
- Performance-optimized video content (15s-60s)
- Platform-specific ad copy and messaging
- Brand-consistent design execution
- Rapid iteration and A/B test variants

The Value Exchange:

This division of labor allows SMB retailers to leverage their existing in-house campaign management expertise while accessing enterprise-grade creative production at SMB-appropriate pricing. Clients maintain strategic control while eliminating the creative bottleneck that constrains their growth.

Client Provides:

The "Management"

- Campaign strategy and targeting
- Media buying and budget allocation
- Performance monitoring and optimization
- Lead management and conversion tracking
- Direct platform relationships



Team Composition: **The "Lean 5"** **Operating Model**

Sutherland's Lean 5 model is designed for speed, accountability, and output efficiency. A focused, cross-functional team combines strategic oversight, production expertise, persuasive copy, and streamlined project management to deliver high-quality creative at scale without the layered overhead of traditional agencies.



1. Creative Lead

Role:

Strategic creative direction, brand stewardship, quality assurance

Responsibilities:

- Brand guideline interpretation and application
 - Creative brief development and refinement
 - Concept ideation and art direction
 - Final asset review and approval
 - Performance insights translation to creative strategy
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Profile:

Experienced in advertising/retail creative experience, portfolio demonstrating direct-response and brand-building work, data-literacy for performance optimization



2. Graphic Designers/ Video Editors

Role:

Tactical asset production, format adaptation, technical execution

Responsibilities:

- Static image design and composition
 - Video editing, motion graphics, sound design
 - Multi-format asset adaptation
 - Brand guideline adherence
 - Technical QA (file specs, platform requirements)
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Profile:

Experienced digital advertising production, proficiency in Adobe Creative Suite, Figma, Premiere/After Effects, understanding of platform-specific best practices



3. Copywriter/Content Specialist

Role:

Ad copy creation, messaging strategy, voice/tone consistency

Responsibilities:

- Platform-specific ad copy (headlines, body copy)
 - Messaging framework development
 - A/B test copy variation creation
 - Tone/voice guidelines application
 - Compliance review (claims, disclosures)
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Profile:

Experienced direct-response copywriting, retail/e-commerce experience preferred, understanding of persuasion psychology and conversion optimization



4. Project Coordinator

Role:

Client interface, workflow management, delivery assurance

Responsibilities:

- Creative brief intake and clarification
 - Timeline management and deadline tracking
 - Client communication and expectation setting
 - Revision coordination and feedback routing
 - Performance reporting and insights delivery
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Profile:

Experienced project management in creative/agency environment, exceptional organizational and communication skills, proficiency with project management tools

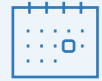


Implementation Plan: **30-60-90 Day Roadmap**

Our phased 30-60-90 day roadmap ensures structured onboarding, rapid production activation, and measurable performance impact. Beginning with brand alignment and process setup, we move into pilot execution and optimization, and then scale to full production velocity with embedded feedback loops, driving consistent creative output and sustained ROAS improvement.

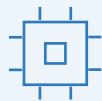


Phase 1 (Days 1-30): **Foundation and Setup**



Week 1-2: Brand Intelligence Gathering

- Conduct comprehensive brand audit (existing creative, guidelines, competitive positioning)
- Interview stakeholders to understand business objectives, target audiences, key value propositions
- Analyze historical campaign performance to identify creative success patterns
- Document current creative pain points and workflow bottlenecks



Deliverables:

- Brand playbook (30-40 pages): Guidelines, design system, messaging framework
- Competitive creative landscape report
- Performance benchmarking analysis



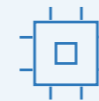
Success Metrics:

Brand playbook approval within 15 days



Week 3-4: Asset Library Setup and Process Alignment

- Establish approval processes, SLA commitments, communication protocols
- Create initial master templates for primary campaign types
- Conduct kickoff workshop with client campaign management team



Deliverables:

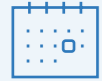
- Creative request workflow documentation
- Team training completion (client and Sutherland teams)

Platform training completion: 100% of stakeholders

First creative brief submission within 30 days

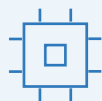


Phase 2 (Days 31-60): **Pilot Production and Optimization**



Week 5-6: First Campaign Asset Production

- Execute 10-15 high-impact ad sets across client priority platforms
- Implement rapid feedback loops (24-hour revision turnarounds)
- Monitor quality, timing, and client satisfaction metrics
- Identify and resolve workflow friction points



Deliverables:

- Campaign set 1: 10-15 platform-optimized assets
- Mid-pilot review meeting and feedback session
- Process refinement documentation



Success Metrics:

On-time delivery rate: **95%+**

Client satisfaction score: **4.5+/5.0**

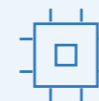
Creative approval cycle time: **<48 hours**

Observable performance improvements vs. baseline



Week 7-8: Performance Integration and Iteration

- Launch creative assets in client-managed campaigns
- Establish performance tracking cadence (weekly reviews)
- Analyze early performance indicators (engagement, conversion attribution)
- Produce second campaign set incorporating performance learnings

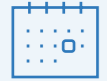


Deliverables:

- Campaign set 2: 10-15 assets with optimization iterations
- Pilot performance report (creative effectiveness analysis)
- Refined creative strategy recommendations

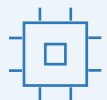


Phase 3 (Days 61-90): **Full-velocity Production and Continuous Improvement**



Week 9-10: Production Ramp to Contracted Volume

- Scale to full monthly asset allocation (25-100+ assets depending on tier)
- Establish predictable request-to-delivery rhythms
- Implement A/B testing framework for systematic creative optimization
- Create evergreen asset library for ongoing use



Deliverables:

- Full monthly asset allocation (per contracted tier)
- A/B testing creative variants
- Evergreen asset library (20-30 reusable components)



Success Metrics:

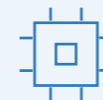
Monthly asset volume target achievement: **100%**

Creative-driven ROAS improvement: **15-25%** vs. baseline



Week 11-12: Feedback Loop Institutionalization

- Conduct comprehensive 90-day retrospective
- Document performance learnings and optimization opportunities
- Present strategic recommendations for next-quarter creative strategy
- Align on ongoing cadence, communication, and improvement processes



Deliverables:

- 90-day performance summary report
- Next-quarter creative strategy presentation
- Process optimization roadmap
- Client success review and renewal discussion

Client retention commitment: executed contract renewal or expansion

NPS score: **8+/10**



The Outcome: **Reduced Creative Overhead, Increased ROAS**

Sutherland's Creative-as-a-Service offering delivers measurable business outcomes:

60-70%

reduction

in creative production costs vs. traditional agency models

45-55%

reduction

in time-to-market for campaign launches

15-30%

ROAS improvement

through platform-optimized, performance-engineered creative

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Artificial Intelligence. Automation. Cloud Engineering. Advanced Analytics. For Enterprises, these are key factors of success. For us, they're our core expertise.

We work with global iconic brands. We bring them a unique value proposition through market-leading technologies and business process excellence. At the heart of it all is Digital Engineering Services – the foundation that powers rapid innovation and scalable business transformation.

We've created 363 unique and independent inventions, 250 of which are AI-based and rolled up under several patent grants in critical technologies. Leveraging our advanced products and platforms, we drive digital transformation at scale, optimize critical business operations, reinvent experiences, and pioneer new solutions, all provided through a seamless "as-a-service" model.

For each company, we provide new keys for their businesses, the people they work with, and the customers they serve. With proven strategies and agile execution, we don't just enable change – we engineer digital outcomes.

