

Creative Industries Census 2026



MAJOR PLAYERS

Global Talent Agency

Who I am



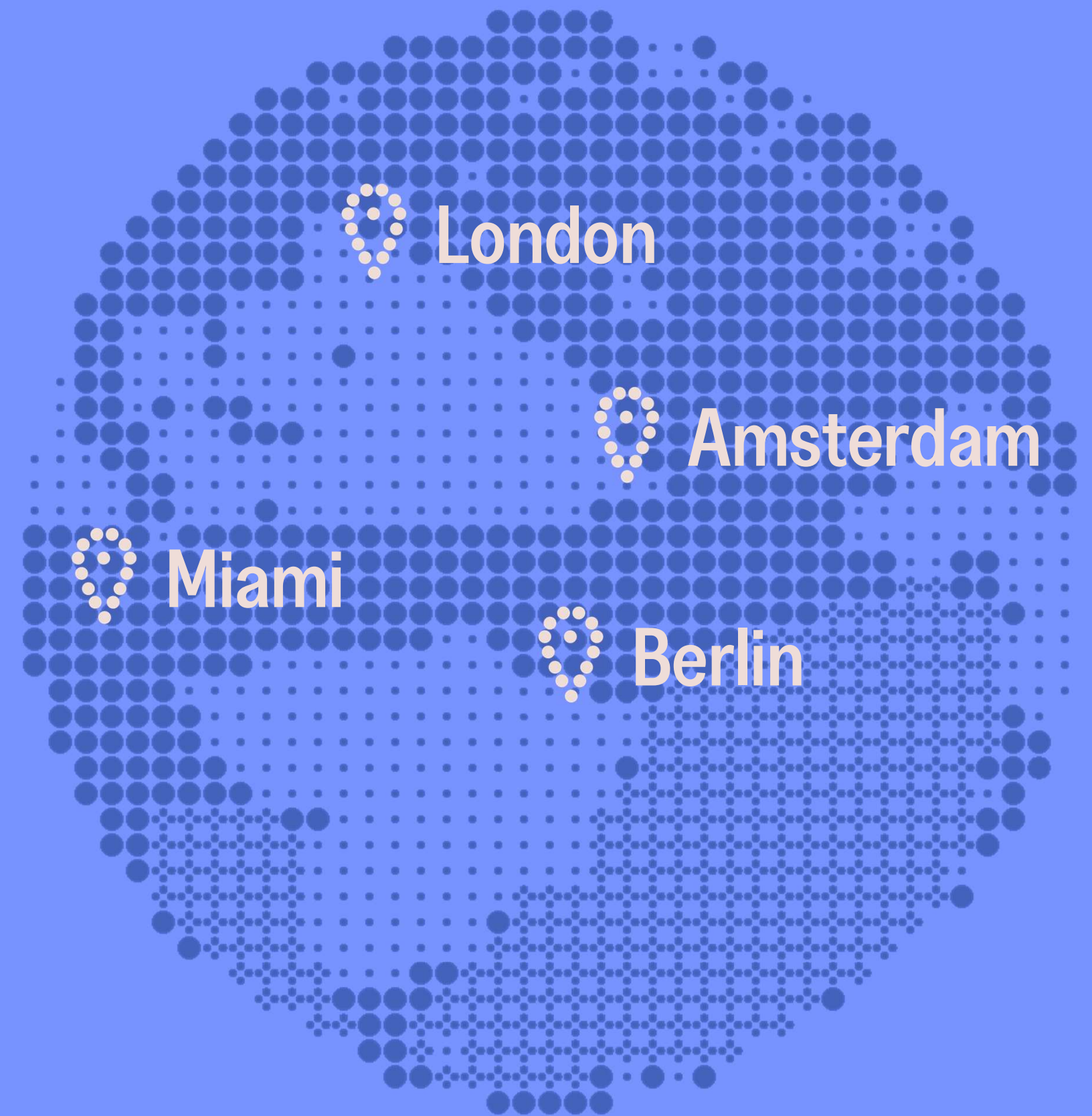
Rosa Rolo
Managing Director
15+ years experience

Major Players

Global Talent Agency

Who We Are

The original
marketing and
creative talent
agency.



Major Players

Global Talent Agency

Disciplines We Cover

Business
Development

Client Services

Createch

Creative Services

Creative, Design,
UI Design & UX

CRM, Data &
Analytics

E-commerce

Experiential, Events &
Partnerships

Marketing, Brand,
PR & Comms

Performance &
Digital Marketing

Production
& Studio

Social, Content
& Influencer

Strategy

Media & Ad Tech

Project Management

Major Players

Global Talent Agency



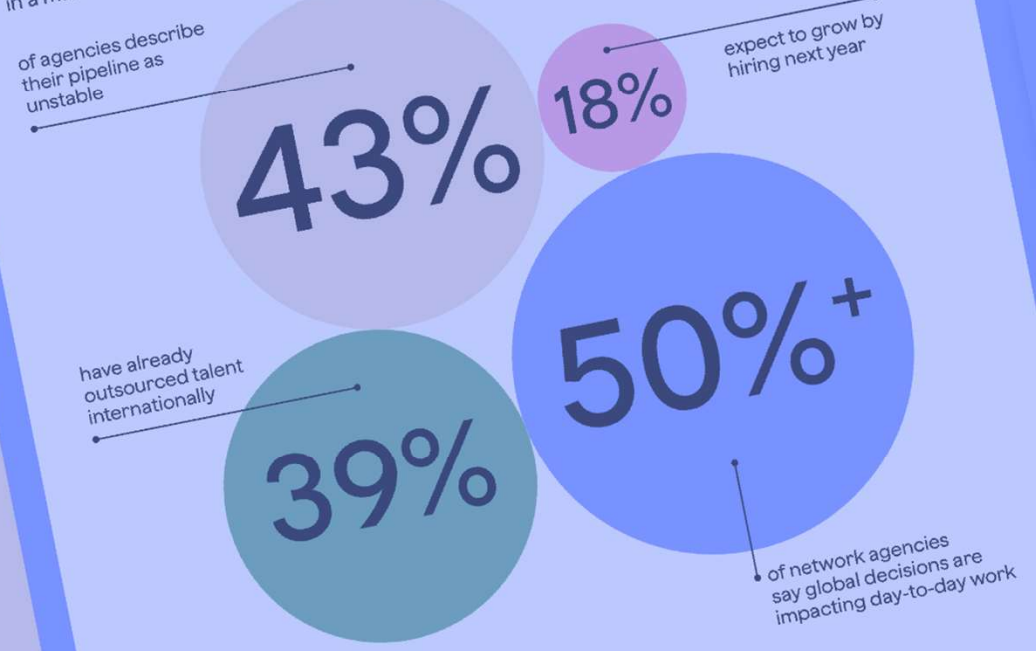
Up to... report no defined progression framework

The desire to grow is there, but the infrastructure to support it is not. Career development training barely reaches anyone, and the industry isn't just failing to bring talent in - it's failing to develop the talent it already has.

92% of brands now have fully or partially in-house teams

only 6%...

The financial picture reinforces the strain. AI, offshoring and consolidation are compressing margins from every direction - and agencies are under growing pressure to prove their value in a market rewriting the rules in real time.



THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CENSUS

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CRM, DATA & ANALYTICS

Demand remains consistent and is growing in several areas. Talent retention and customer engagement is keeping this market hot. Managers among the most requested freelance profiles due to AI integration within CRM platforms is raising expectations and driving increasingly looking for the ability to critically assess and direct rather than simply operate the platform. Alongside this, firms are becoming one of the most active brief areas in the discipline, investment in owned data infrastructure and talent needs segmentation, journey design and touchpoint optimisation. Clients are also notably specific about industry niche expertise. CRM profiles are being deprioritised in favour of candidates with relevant audience and commercial context.

Roles in demand



Market outlook

As AI becomes further embedded in CRM platforms, the value will shift toward candidates who can govern and direct its output strategically. First-party data fluency will become a baseline expectation rather than a differentiator.

The distance between what we know and what we need is growing. As an individual you must own your growth. Carve out thirty minutes a day to use AI, the top skill needed for the years ahead and make time to play with these tools with your team. As leaders we have a responsibility to guard the budgets and the hours the teams need to learn. We can't afford to wait for a quiet moment to up skill when businesses say their teams must learn new ways to work just to keep up.

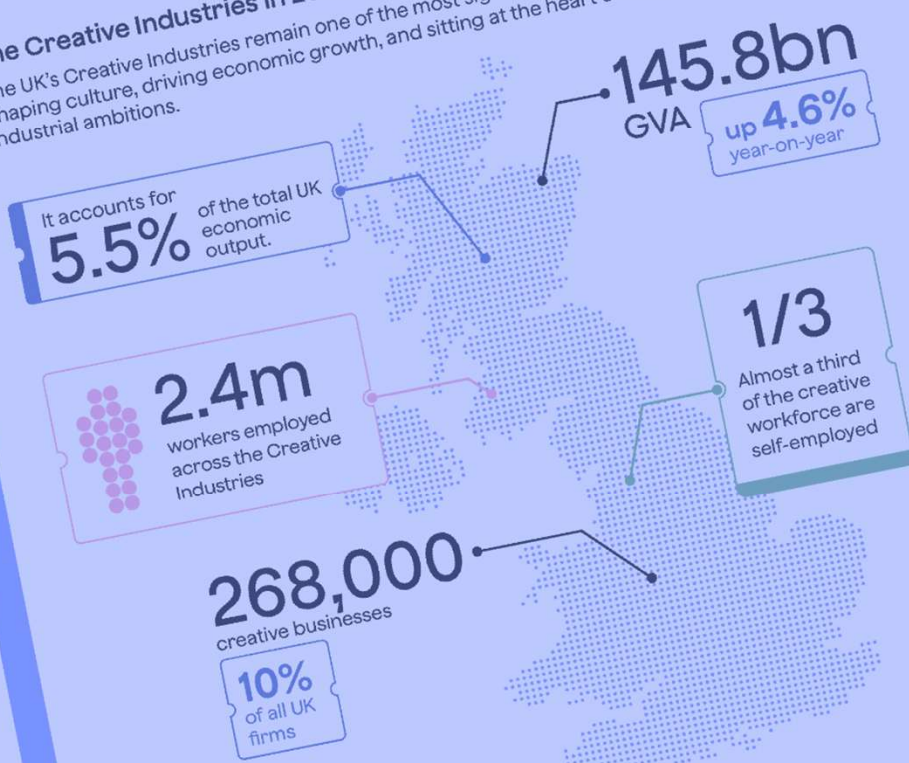


Carol Feeley – Head of Creative, Ocado Retail

THE STATE OF PLAY

The Creative Industries in 2026

The UK's Creative Industries remain one of the most significant forces in the country - shaping culture, driving economic growth, and sitting at the heart of the government's industrial ambitions.



2026

PERMANENT		Average Salary 2026	Salary Range 2026
Biddable Account Director		£60,000	£60k - 80k
Head of Biddable		£80,000	£75k - 100k
Media Strategist		£70,000	£70k - 100k
Chief Strategy Officer		£120,000	£100k - 160k

FREELANCE		Average Day Rate 2026	Day Rate Range 2026
Biddable Account Director		£375	£350 - 450
Head of Biddable		£450+	£450
Media Strategist		£500+	£500+
Chief Strategy Officer		£700+	£700+

THE SKILLS DISCONNECT

65% of hard-to-fill vacancies in the Creative Industries are already attributed to skills shortages.³ But the impact doesn't stop at hiring - skills gaps within existing workforces are equally damaging, limiting performance, constraining growing businesses unable to capitalise on the tools and...

The Creative Industries Sector Plan, published in June 2025, sets a 10-year blueprint to position the UK as the world's leading destination for creative investment. It's backed by £500 million in funding and an ambition to double business investment to £31-35 billion annually by 2035. Both figures are compelling, the reality for businesses and workforces tells...

STALL

McKinsey's latest research shows ethnic diversity are 39% more likely to shine in the Creative Industries, representation through our partnerships and data, working to close the gap.

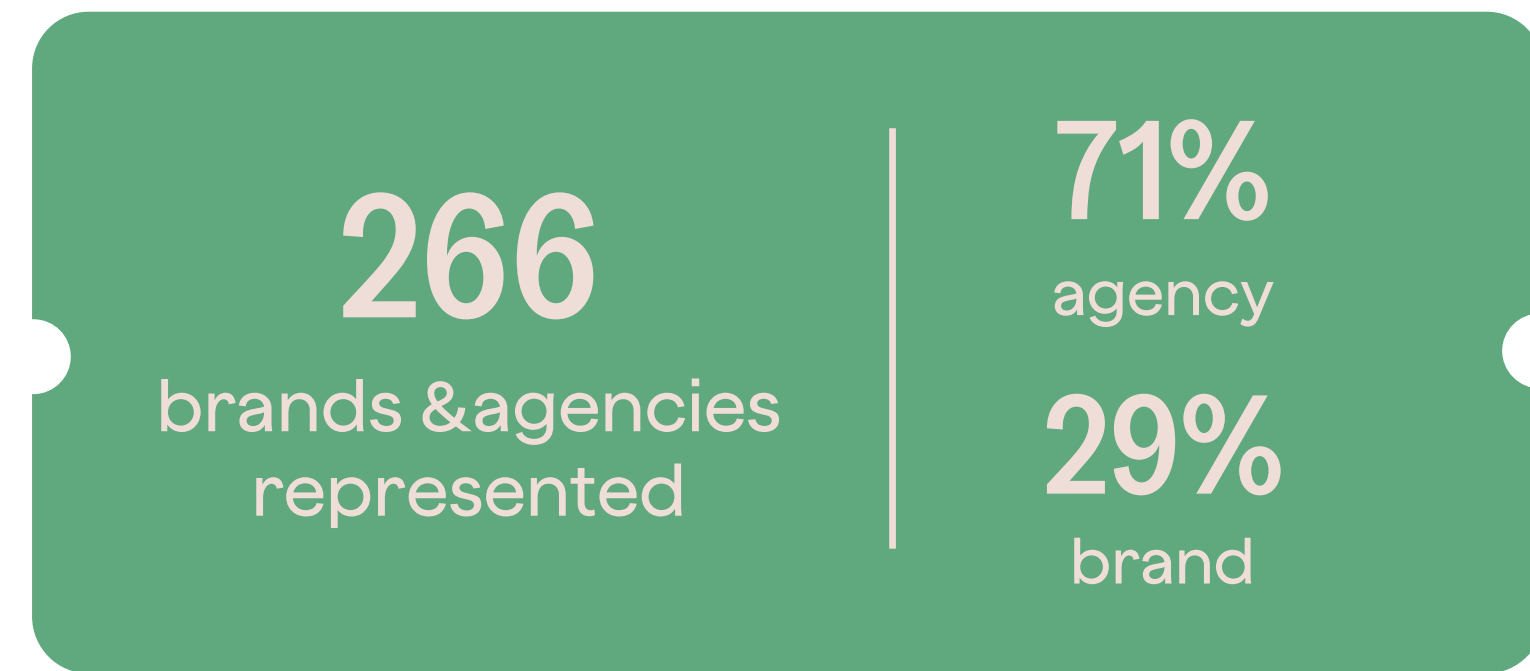
say their organisation is making no progress at all



to

Only

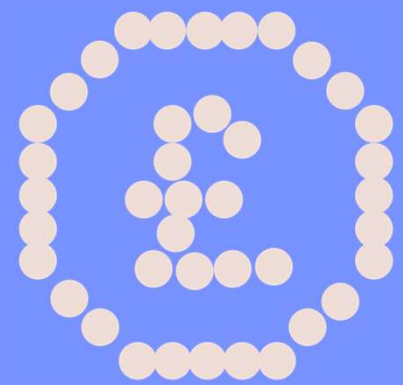
The 2026 Census Data



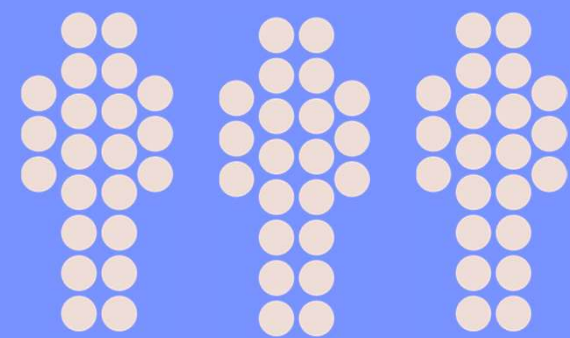
Representative of 100,000+ employees

393,690+ data points

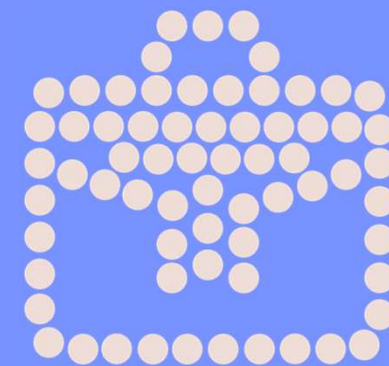
The State of Play



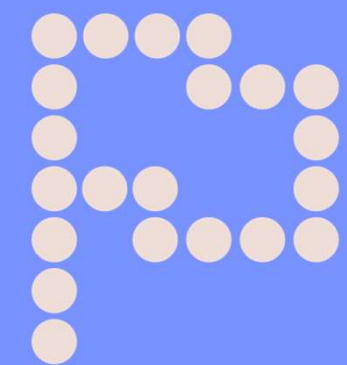
145.8bn GVA
up 4.6% year-on-year



2.4 mil workers
employed across
the Creative
Industries

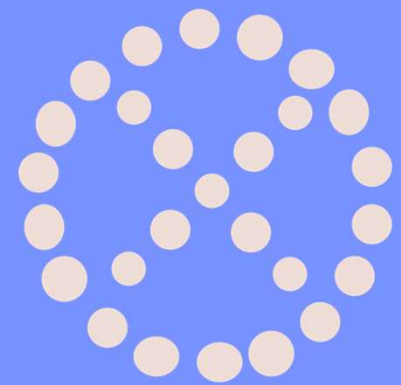


Accounts for
7% of all UK jobs
almost a third are self-employed

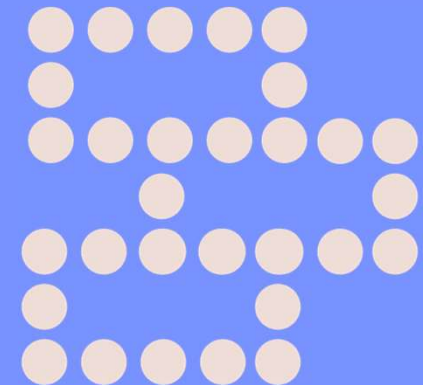


**268,000 creative
businesses**
10% of all UK firms

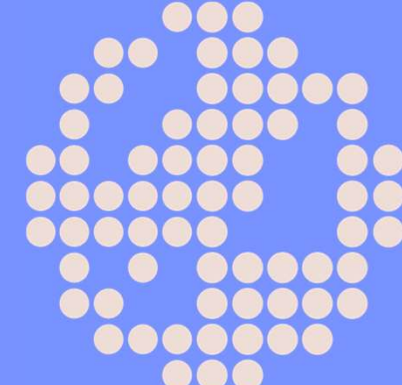
The State of Play



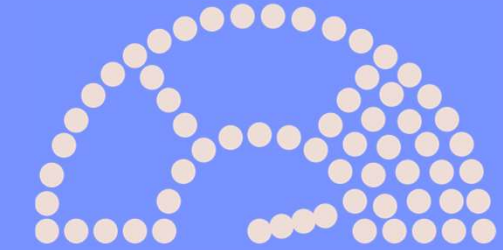
57% of businesses
made
redundancies
in the last 12
months



Only 18%
of businesses
expect to grow by
hiring into their
teams in 2026

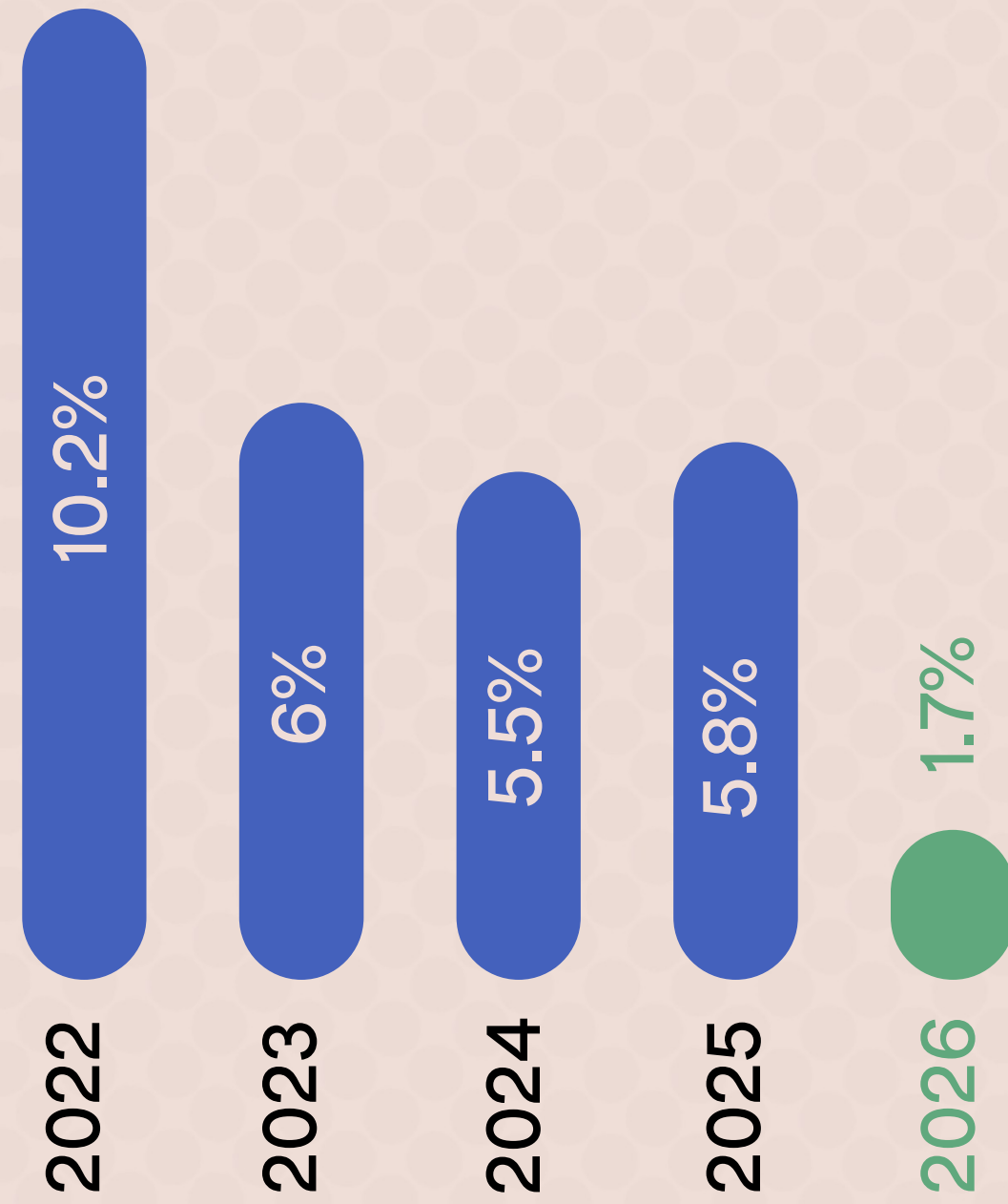


**50% of network
agencies**
say global decisions
are impacting work

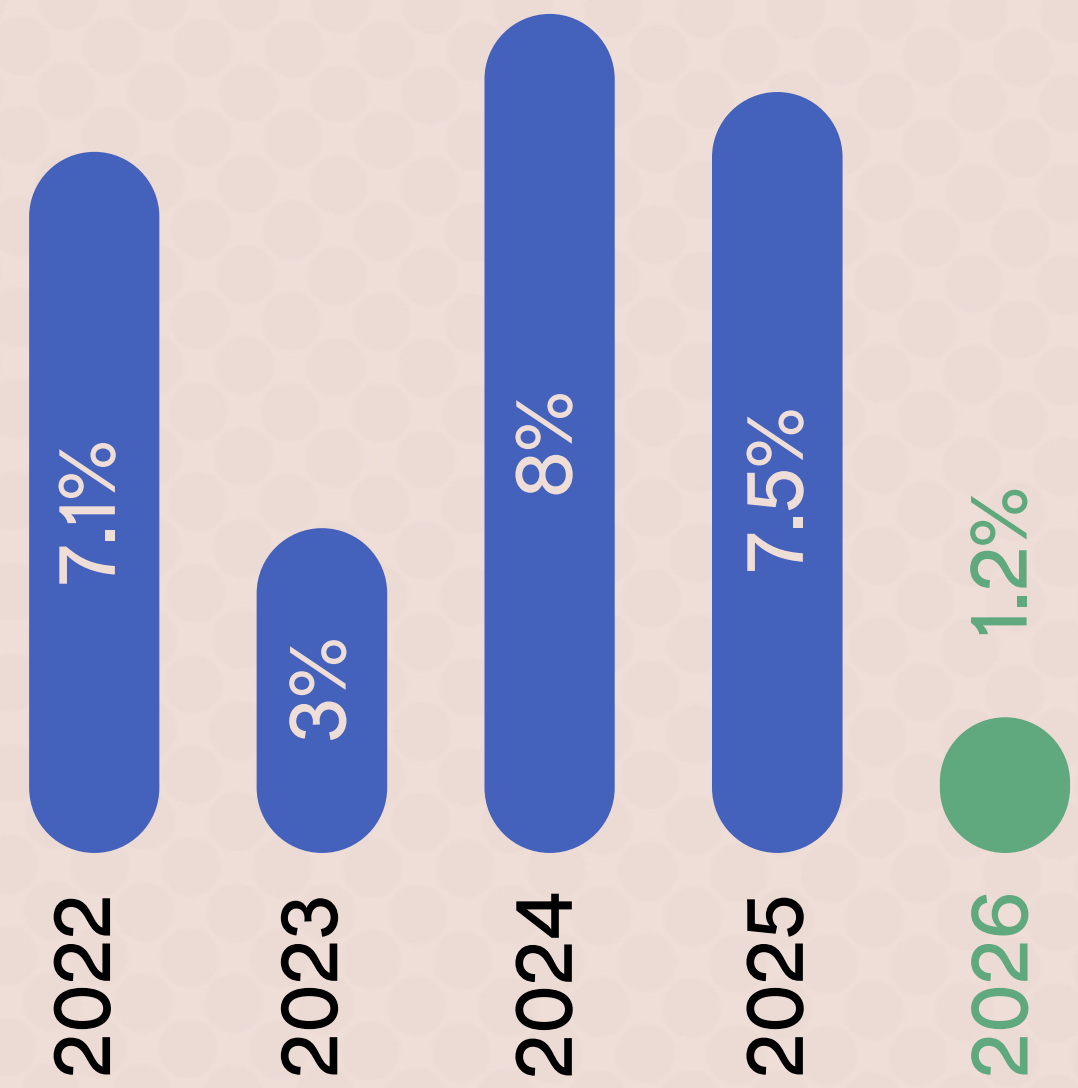


43% of agencies
describe their
revenue and
current pipeline as
unstable

Salaries



Day Rates



Money Talks

Only 24%
of candidates believe they're being paid fairly

43% of businesses
plan small inflationary increases (19% are planning no salary changes)

60% of businesses
say managing salary expectations is their biggest talent challenge

The Great Unrest

More than a third (34%) of professionals changed jobs last year

This marks the end of a period defined by economic caution over career ambition. Although financial pressures haven't eased, restlessness has overtaken stability – with 55% now likely to leave their current role within the next 6-12 months.

The Skills Disconnect

41% say their skills are not fit for the future of work

80% rank technical proficiency as the #1 future skill

65%
of hard-to-fill
Creative
Industries
vacancies are
already
attributed to a
skills shortage

Demonstrate Impact

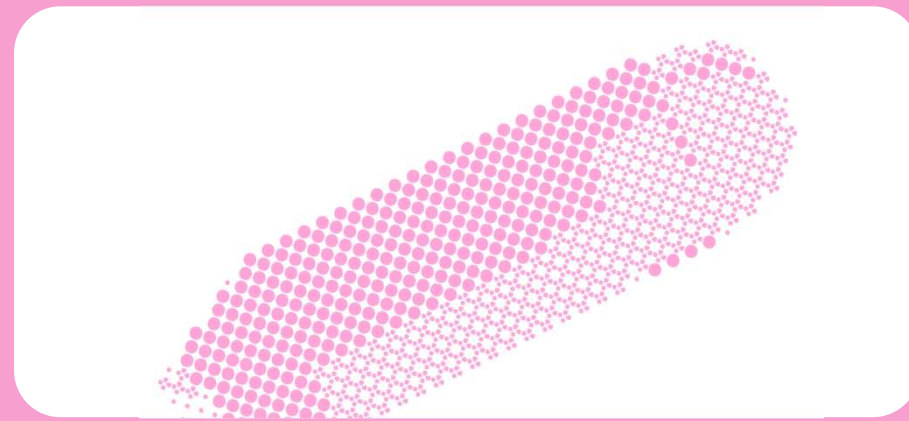
Quantify everything

Replace vague claims with numbers wherever possible. Actual figures will bolster your experience and make your impact undeniable.



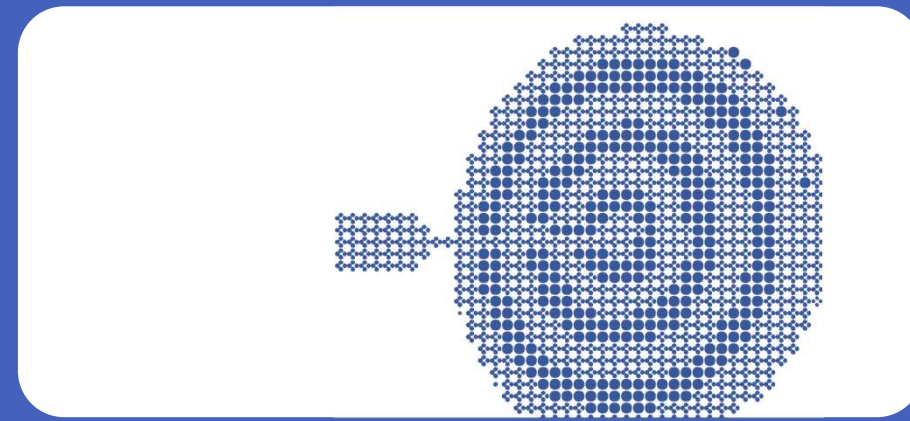
Show your thinking

In interviews and applications, articulate the “why” behind your decisions. People hire for good judgment and critical thinking, not just execution.



Build your proof

Keep a running “wins doc” with campaigns, results, testimonials, case studies, etc. Your portfolio is your evidence bank. Update it now, not before your next job hunt.

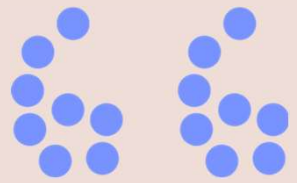


Let others speak for you

LinkedIn recommendations, client testimonials and public-facing work should do the heavy lifting. Ask for endorsements while projects are fresh and hot, instead of months later.



The AI Productivity Paradox



The question has moved on from ‘are you using AI’, to ‘how are you using AI?’

The agencies and brands pulling ahead aren’t the ones with the most tools or the most enthusiastic early adopters – they’re the ones turning scattered experimentation into shared capability. That’s where the real return lives.



Emma Wharton, Spark AI

The DE&I Stall

Up to **82%** do not have a specific DE&I budget

The gender pay gap
is now

12.2%

in permanent roles

Men earn on average

£40 

per day in freelance
rates vs women

Only

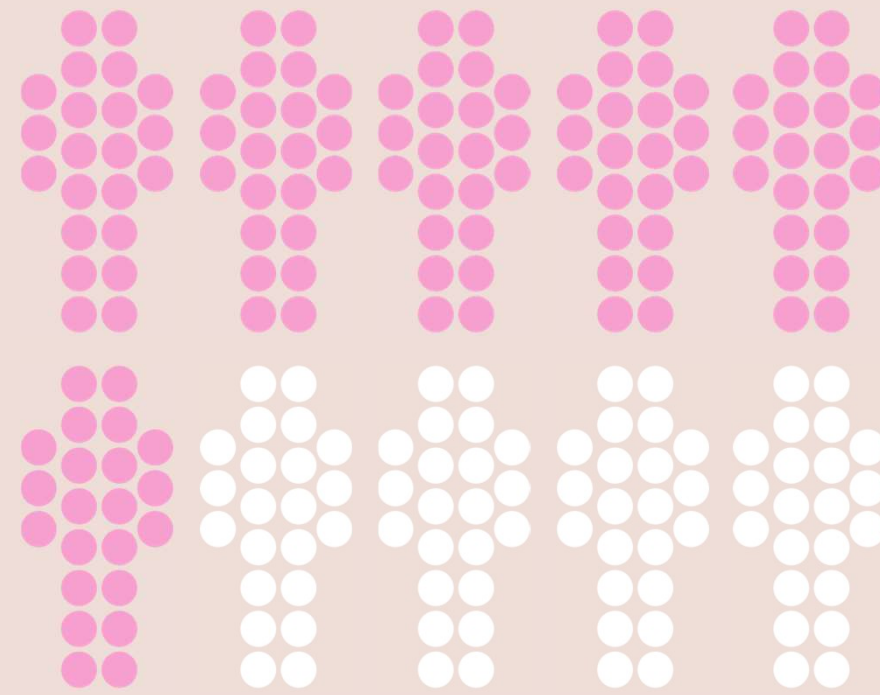
17%

of women earn
£85k or over vs
26% of men

Black women earn
up to

£17,888 

than white males



**60% of women experienced burnout
vs 52% of men**

What can you do to look after yourself?

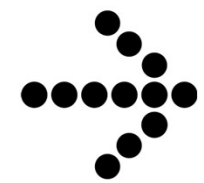
Coaching

Managing
Expectations

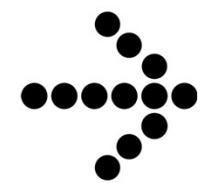
Setting Clear
Boundaries

Asking For
Help

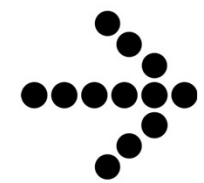
Key Takeaways



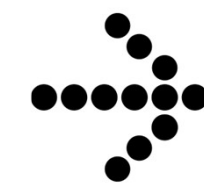
Know your worth – let it empower you in your decision-making



What is the future of your sector, and are you on the path to gaining those new skills?



How can you demonstrate impact?



Look after yourself

Resources

Career Comedown
Stefanie Sword-Williams

CREATIVE EQUALS

20 / 20
LEVELS



Coaches
Laura Bartlett, Jo Olsen,
Karen Charles

NABS

Major Players' Salary
Benchmarking Tool

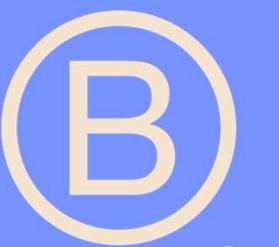
RUVO

*spark

Any Questions?

**MAJOR
PLAYERS**

Certified



Corporation

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