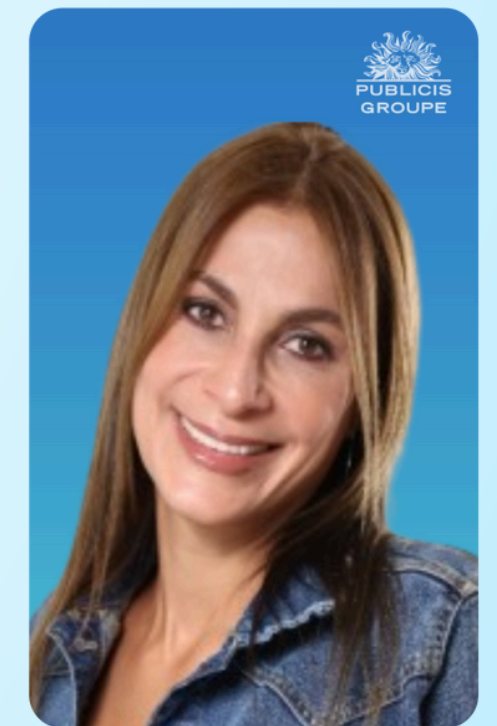
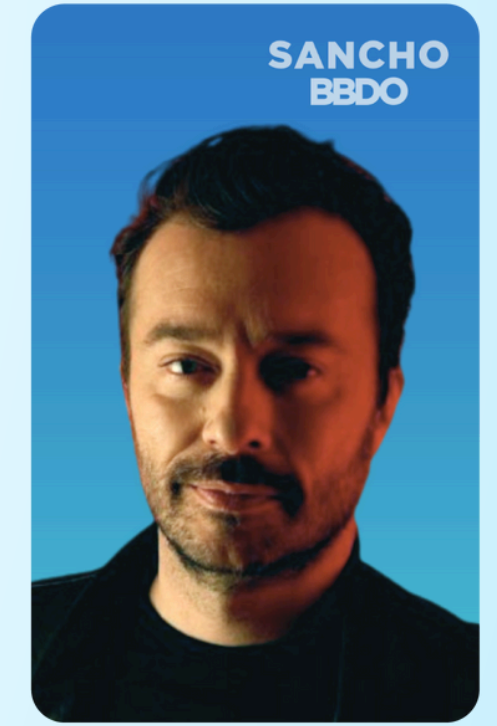




TopVoices

# AI, profitability and the new agency model

The perspective of **agency leaders**



# Introduction

If you lead an agency today, you're probably asking yourself several of these questions (though not always out loud):

- 1 Are we using artificial intelligence well or just reacting to change?
- 2 Where does the team's time go?
- 3 Are we defending the true value of our work... or accepting conditions that wear us down?

The creative industry has always been characterized by its talent, intuition, and ability to solve complex problems. But the context has changed. Margins are thinner, clients are more demanding, and teams are more exhausted. And in this scenario, **simply working more is no longer enough: you have to work smarter.**

During the +CTG event, we sat down to talk with leaders who are facing these same dilemmas every day. CEOs and COOs who speak not from theory, but from real-world decision-making experience:

**When to invest, when to say no, how to take care of people without putting the business at risk.**

This ebook doesn't aim to offer magic solutions or easy answers. Instead, it brings to the table the real conversations happening inside agencies today. How artificial intelligence is being integrated into processes. What strategic decisions are being made to sustain value. And **how data and operations are becoming allies (not enemies) of creativity.**

Throughout these pages you will find ideas, frameworks for thinking, and real-world experiences from leaders in the region. Not to copy models, but to help you develop your own.

Because, ultimately, the challenge isn't adapting to a new technology. **The real challenge is remaining relevant, human, and profitable all at the same time.**

# Index

<b>Chapter 1   Artificial intelligence is no longer optional</b> .....	<b>01</b>
> AI as a structural change (not a trend)	
> From experimentation to real-world use	
> AI as part of life (not a threat)	
> Automating to think better	
<b>Chapter 2   Strategic Decisions for a New Agency Model</b> .....	<b>07</b>
> The new dilemma for agencies: efficiency without loss of value	
> Seniority, focus, and real value	
> Transparency to defend value	
> Evolving the way we charge	
<b>Chapter 3   COR as a strategic ally in the transformation</b> .....	<b>12</b>
> Business conversations with real data	
> From selling time to selling value	
> Measuring to take care of people	
> Integrating, professionalizing, and optimizing	
<b>Conclusion: The future is built today</b> .....	<b>18</b>

# CHAPTER 1

## Artificial intelligence is **no longer optional, it's essential.**

Before talking about tools, prompts or automation, it's worth pausing for a second. Most agency leaders don't ask themselves whether artificial intelligence will impact their business. That much is already clear.

The real question is another, much more uncomfortable one:

Are we using AI to work better or just to run faster?

Because when everything speeds up, the risk isn't falling behind. The risk is losing clarity. And in an industry where value lies in judgment, **losing clarity is losing identity.**

# CHAPTER 1

## Artificial intelligence is no longer optional.

### AI as a structural change (not a trend)

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For years, the creative industry has incorporated technology reactively: new tools, new software, new formats. Artificial intelligence marks a turning point. It's not just another tool, but **a structural change in how we work, make decisions, and create value.**

Artificial intelligence doesn't appear out of thin air. It arrives at agencies with exhausted teams, tight profit margins, and clients demanding more for the same. Therefore, **integrating it is not a technical decision, but a cultural one.**

The agencies that are achieving the best results are not those that add more tools, but those that dare to ask uncomfortable questions: what tasks no longer make the same sense as before, where is real value added, and what kind of work deserves their employees' time.

The risk lies not in adopting it quickly or slowly, but in doing so without a clear strategy. The agencies that achieve the best results are not those that "use the most AI," but those that **integrate it strategically**: to free up time, reduce operational friction, and refocus on critical thinking.

## From experimentation to **real-world use**.



**Mauricio Garnier**  
CEO of GARNIER BBDO

For Mauricio Garnier, CEO of Garnier BBDO, the integration of artificial intelligence goes far beyond creativity:

“Today, we integrate artificial intelligence not only into creative processes. We have been very proactive in exploring **how to integrate it into all areas of the business.**”

At Garnier, the adoption of AI is accompanied by ongoing training, process audits, and concrete impact measurement. This point is crucial: without measurement, AI becomes mere intuition.

“We are **measuring** what **software** is used, what it is used for, and how much it accelerates each task in each department.”

The theory is clear: real efficiency isn't achieved by adding more tools, but **by eliminating friction in everyday life**. That's why the focus isn't just on the creative "wow," but on what happens every day.

“We are very interested in knowing how artificial intelligence helps with the boring, day-to-day tasks, **with what takes up time for teams.**”

This is where one of the major cultural shifts emerges: using AI not to produce more, but to **reclaim thinking time**. When AI is used to automate repetitive, administrative, or low-value tasks, something crucial happens: **quality time for thinking becomes available**, and that's where agencies become irreplaceable once again.

## AI as part of life (and not as a threat)



**Francisco Samper**  
CEO de Mullenlowe  
LATAM

Francisco Samper, CEO of MullenLowe LATAM, says bluntly:

**"AI is not a technology, it's already part of life. And it's going to completely change roles."**

In just two years, the regional operation adapted to a new reality:

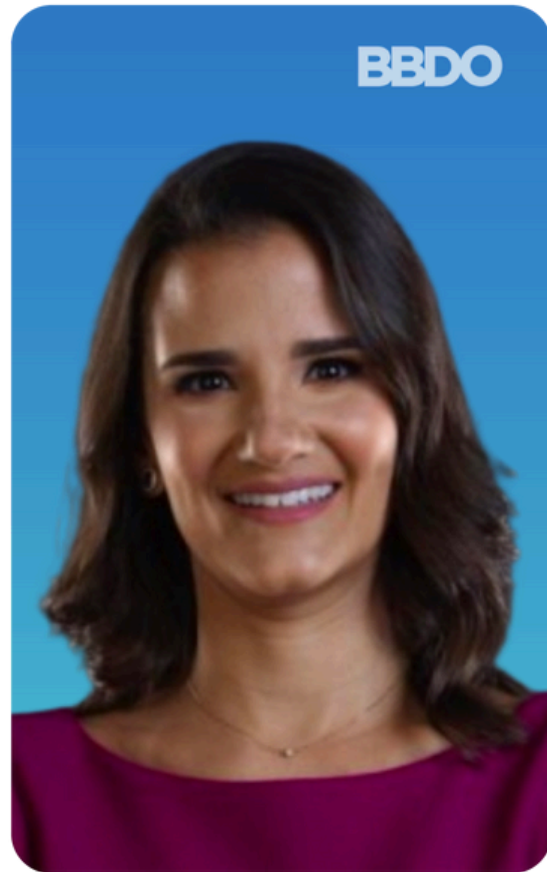
**"It won't replace all jobs, but there are tasks it performs better."**

The real risk is not in automation, but in losing the differential: "People can make a prompt, but it's not the same as the judgment of someone who says: this yes, this no."

Artificial intelligence isn't meant to strip agencies of their identity, but rather to challenge them. To force them to decide what's worth preserving and what no longer adds value. In that process, judgment, experience, and **strategic vision remain irreplaceable.**

**"The key is not to lose the added value we provide as an agency."**

## Automate to **think better**



**Silvia Intriago**  
CEO of BBDO

From Ecuador, Silvia Intriago, CEO of BBDO, reinforces the same idea:

"**Artificial intelligence** is a support for people, automating processes so they can **dedicate more time to what really matters.**"

And he sums it up with a powerful sentence:

"If you're spending all day **doing things that aren't high value**, you're losing money."

**Automation does not dehumanize.** It is, in fact, about creating space for humanity: for thinking, for better discussions with clients, for ensuring the quality of work and the well-being of teams.

# Artificial intelligence is no longer optional.

## Key takeaway

Artificial intelligence isn't asking you to adopt new tools. It's forcing you to make decisions.

Not about technology, but about judgment: what tasks justify your team's time, what decisions require seniority, and where energy is currently being wasted that doesn't return in value.

Perhaps the question is not whether your agency "uses AI", **but whether it is making good use of the time that AI could be freeing up.**

Because automation isn't about speeding things up. It's about **making better choices about what's worth thinking about.**

## CHAPTER 2

# Strategic decisions for a new agency model

Some decisions aren't announced in presentations or celebrated with awards. Decisions made in uncomfortable meetings, looking at numbers that aren't always appealing, or listening to teams pushed to their limits.

Today, leading an agency means accepting a constant tension: **being efficient without emptying the work of its meaning; maintaining profitability without burning people out; defending value without damaging relationships.**

## The new dilemma for agencies: **efficiency without loss of value**

For years, many agencies grew by increasing volume. More projects, more accounts, more hours. That model is now showing signs of strain. Not because it's wrong, but because the context has changed.

True efficiency isn't about doing more with less, but about **making better decisions about where to focus the team's energy. And that requires focus, seniority, and data.**

## Seniority, focus and **real value**



**Andrés Carvajal**  
CEO of SANCHO BBDO

Andrés Carvajal, CEO of Sancho BBDO, raises an uncomfortable but necessary point:

“Sometimes we **underestimate the power of seniority** and gray hair. **That's wrong.**”

From a theoretical perspective, this implies rethinking the classic agency pyramid. For years, growth relied on structures that were very heavyweight at the operational base and lightweight in decision-making. Today, that model is showing its limitations.

Sancho's strategy rests on three clear decisions:

- 1 | **Build truly senior teams with real experience in solving business problems.**
- 2 | **Slimming down the structure, not to lose capacity, but to redistribute value.**
- 3 | **Raise the creative bar, prioritizing ideas that solve real problems.**

## Transparency to **defend value**



Francisco Samper

One of the major historical problems of the industry was **negotiating from a subjective perspective**.

Francisco Samper, CEO of MullenLowe LATAM, explains it clearly:

"When you can come up **with facts** and say: here are the hours, this is what we worked on, the conversation changes."

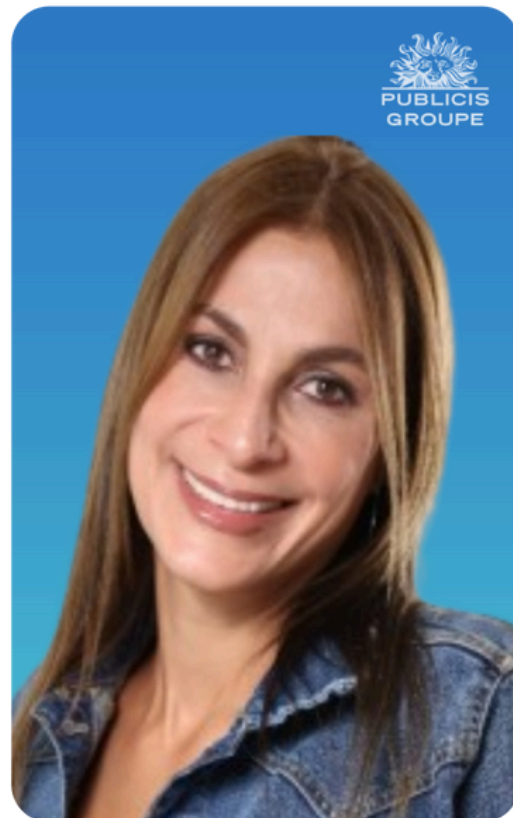
**Operational transparency** allows us to move beyond emotional arguments and into a business conversation:

"I'm not telling a story, I'm **showing facts**."

From a strategic perspective, this enables something fundamental: setting healthy boundaries. Accepting unjustified reductions leads to a spiral that is difficult to reverse.

"If they can't **pay what we're worth**, we'll talk again when they can."

## Evolve the way of **collecting payments**



Christine Saouda, **COO of Publicis Groupe Colombia**, points to one of the most profound debates in the industry:

"The industry needs to evolve towards **different forms of remuneration.**"

The incorporation of technology should not automatically translate into lower fees, but rather into **new ways of assessing the impact:**

"Technology doesn't make us 50% cheaper, **it makes us more agile.**"

From a conceptual standpoint, the challenge is to **move from models based on people and time to schemes that value:**

- 1 | Impact on the **business.**
- 2 | **Strategic** capacity.
- 3 | Agility and **consistency.**

And that requires a change of mindset, both in agencies and clients:

"The way we used to work **has to evolve.**"

**Advocating for new forms of compensation** isn't easy. It requires maturity, data, and conviction. But **it's also a way to take care of teams and maintain healthier relationships with clients** in the long run.

# Strategic decisions for a **new agency model**

## Key takeaway

Many of the problems agencies face today are not operational. They are postponed decisions: decisions about focus; about seniority; about which clients, which models and which dynamics are no longer sustainable.

Efficiency is not built by adding pressure, but by setting clear limits: on volume, on exceptions, and on conditions that erode the value of work.

Defending profitability isn't about being hardline, it's about **professionalizing the conversation**. And that conversation can only happen when there's data, clarity, and an operational plan that backs up what's being promised externally.

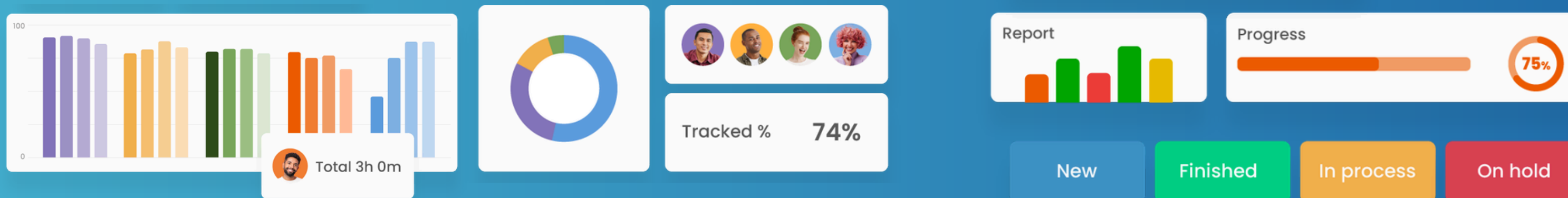
# CHAPTER 3

## COR as a **strategic ally** in the transformation

At this point, an inevitable question arises. Not about technology, nor about creativity, but about something much more concrete:

### How is all of this sustained in actual, day-to-day operations?

Because thinking better, caring for people, upholding values, and making sound decisions isn't just about willpower. It requires visibility. It requires data. And, above all, it **requires taking the discussion from the emotional realm to the business realm**, without losing our humanity along the way.



## Business conversations with **real data**



For Andrés Carvajal, CEO of Sancho BBDO, the impact of COR is not about dashboards or reports, but about the type of conversations it enables:

"We consider COR a partner, **a Sancho to Sancho. An absolutely giant ally.**"

COR appears as that companion that helps to organize, to bring clarity and to support difficult decisions in front of clients and teams.

"Being able to sit down with a **client** with **real data** and have a senior operations conversation changes everything."

When hours, tasks, rework, and busyness are all on display, the relationship matures. Discussions are no longer based on perceptions, but on facts.

"Conversation is absolutely wonderful, because you're not giving your opinion: you're showing."

## Business conversations with **real data**

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One of the most profound changes enabled by this visibility is the shift in focus: **from time to value.**

Andrés explains it with a simple but powerful analogy:

"In a restaurant, you don't care how many people are cooking your dish. You want the best dish in the world to arrive."

The theory behind this decision is simple but powerful: customers don't pay for hours, they pay for results, impact, and solutions to business problems.

How they are executed—with people, technology, or automation—is the **agency's responsibility.**

And that's where **the operation stops being an internal problem and becomes a competitive advantage.**

"Our real commitment is to deliver a perfectly implemented scope of work that **solves business problems.**"

# From selling time to **selling value**



**Mauricio Garnier**  
CEO of GARNIER BBDO

Mauricio Garnier makes it clear:

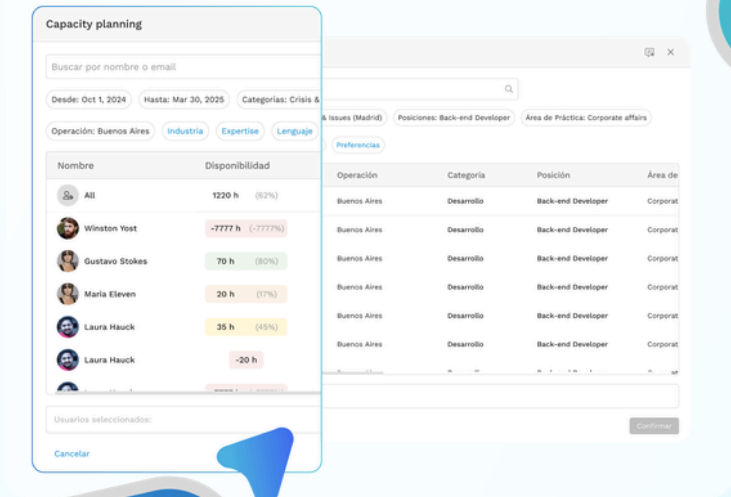
"COR has allowed us, first and foremost, to **take care of people.**"

Accurately measuring hours and workload allows you to anticipate turnover:

"Customers hate turnover, and COR helps us **justify with data** when we need to reinforce teams."

Although profitability is central, the heart of the business remains human:

"This is a **people business.**"



**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

## Integrate, professionalize and **optimize**

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In complex structures like Publicis, integration is key. According to Christine Saouda:

"If we don't have a platform to help us integrate, **we're going to remain fragmented.**"

COR enables a unified view of the business, detecting opportunities and improving real productivity:

"COR is not for a company that does just one thing; it's for **integrating solutions** and **optimizing the business.**"

COR doesn't appear as a magic bullet or a replacement for human judgment. It appears as what many agencies need today: **a common foundation for making better decisions.**

Decisions that allow you to say yes when it makes sense, say no when necessary, and above all, **maintain healthy teams while building a profitable business.**

Because, in a context of constant change, **having operational clarity is a form of leadership.**

# COR as a **strategic ally** in the transformation

## Key takeaway

Transformation doesn't happen when everything is in order. It happens when decisions have to be made amidst complexity.

Deciding when to say yes, when to say no, when to strengthen teams, when to renegotiate, and when to change the way you charge without breaking relationships.

For that, intuition alone is not enough. A common base of information is needed to allow for business discussions without emotional arguments or assumptions.

**Operational clarity does not replace leadership. It enhances it.**

# Conclusion

## The future **is built today**

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Artificial intelligence accelerates processes, but **the real differentiator still lies in judgment, strategy, and people.**

Leaders agree on one fundamental point: the future isn't improvised — it's intentionally built with clear decisions, real data, and strategic allies to accompany you on your journey.

Throughout this journey, COR positions itself as a key player in helping agencies **professionalize their operations, take care of their teams, and maintain profitability in an increasingly challenging environment.**

Because, in the end, the value is not in working faster, but in **working better.**

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