Pencil

the brandtech group

Workflows Playbook

Designing modular, scalable AI workflows

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- Master agentic orchestration with Pencil Workflows: orchestrate agents and models in an open-architecture visual canvas that makes intricate tasks simple, explainable, and repeatable, without the need for any complex coding or technical setup.

Welcome to the playbook

The Workflows Mindset shift

As teams scale their use of AI, the challenge shifts from generating individual outputs to **executing complex creative work reliably and repeatedly**. Workflows are designed to help teams move beyond ad-hoc prompt chains and toward **structured, inspectable systems**.

Workflows allow users to explicitly define:

- How a complex task is broken into steps.
- Which agent is responsible for each step.
- How information flows between those steps.

By making this structure visible and reusable, workflows reduce cognitive overhead and help teams focus on improving **quality at each stage**, rather than managing process complexity.

Workflows

An overview

What are Workflows?

What are workflows?

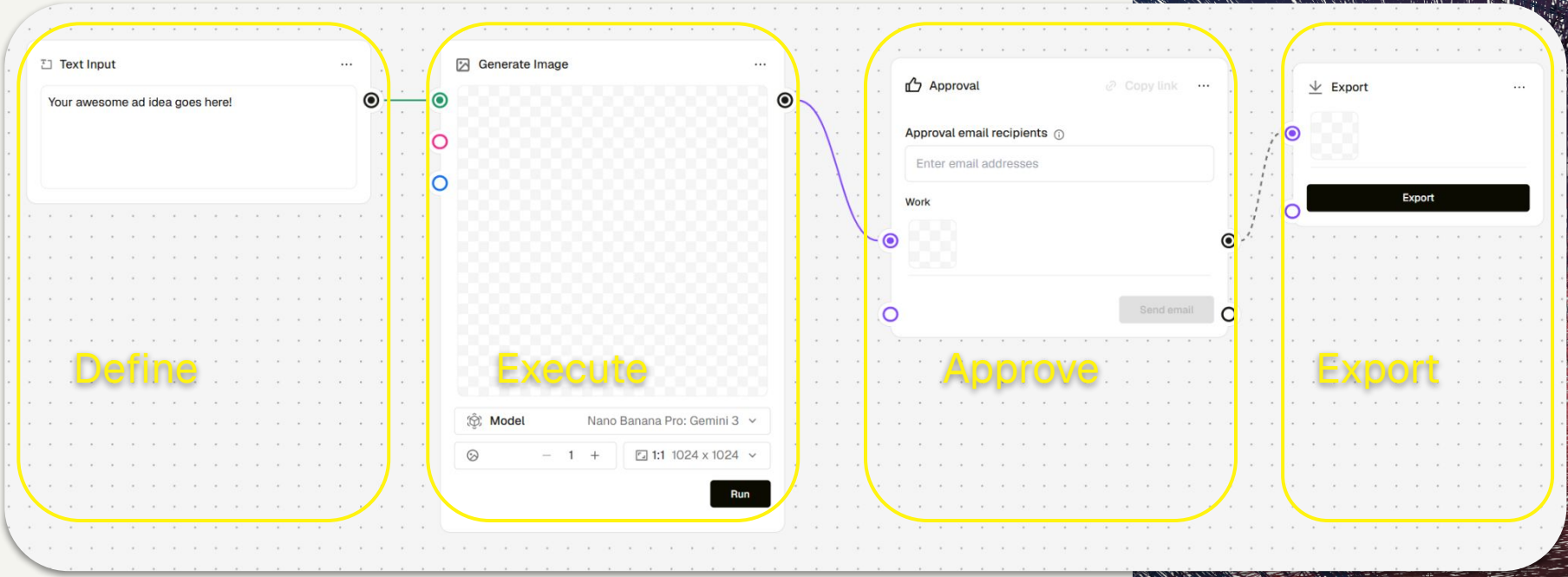
A workflow is a **visual sequence** where you **connect** AI agents, inputs, and actions into a **structured process**.

Each node performs one task. Connections define the order and how information flows between steps.

This differs fundamentally from managing AI work manually:

- **Architecture is made visible**, instead of having to remember what order things should happen
- **Outputs preserved**: Each step's result is visible inside its node in the workflow, making it easy to see what happened at every stage without searching through chronological feeds.
- **One-click execution**: Define agent coordination once in the workflow structure, then execute the entire sequence automatically rather than manually passing outputs between agents each time.

What are workflows?



Workflows are especially valuable for creative and marketing users who routinely decompose large goals into smaller steps and need a way to execute those steps consistently at scale.

The Workflows advantage

The Workflow Advantage:

Three core strengths: simple, explainable & repeatable

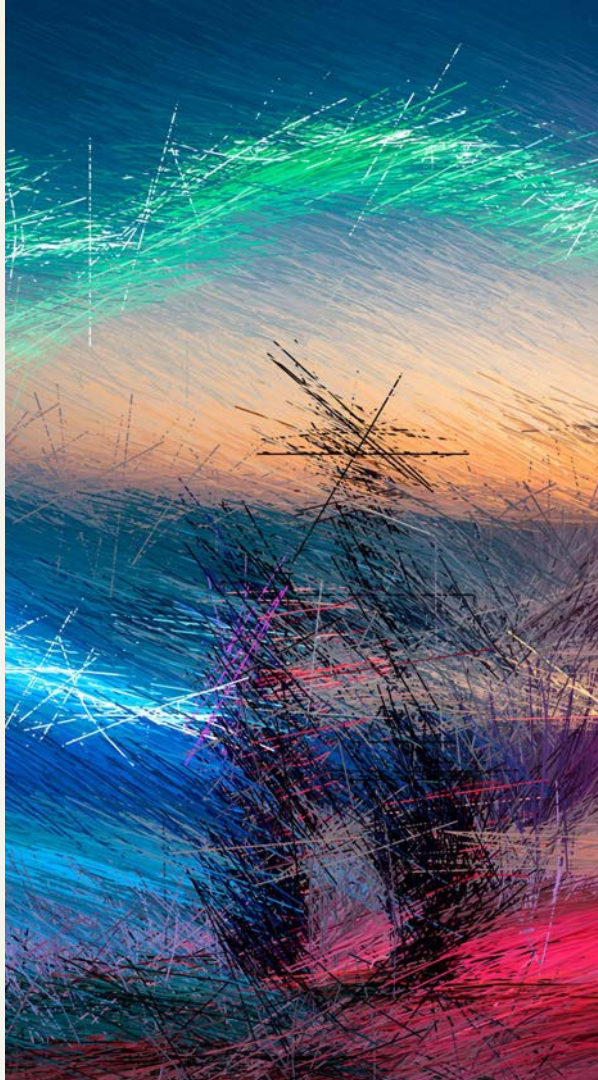
Simplicity

Workflows Contain Complexity

Break multi-step processes into single-focus nodes. Build and test one step at a time.

- Each node handles one task - no overwhelming configuration.
- Problems isolate instantly to specific steps.
- Complexity grows gradually, never all at once.

Result: Complex processes feel manageable because you never work on more than one piece at a time.



The Workflow Advantage:

Three core strengths: simple, explainable & repeatable

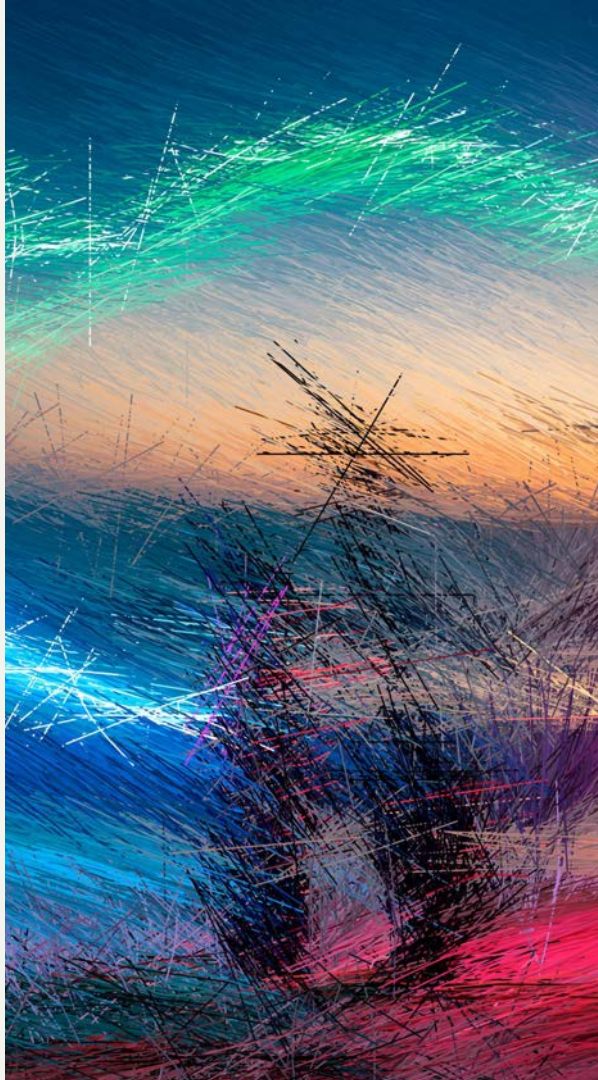
Explainability

The Glass Box Advantage

Every step visible. Every output preserved. No hidden logic.

- Structure shows exactly what happens and when.
- Intermediate outputs captured and organised by step.
- Easy audit trails for compliance and accountability.
- New team members understand process by viewing workflow.

Result: Transparency that facilitates easy reporting, enables learning, debugging, and knowledge transfer; all mission-critical for creative operations in 2026!



The Workflow Advantage:

Three core strengths: simple, explainable & repeatable

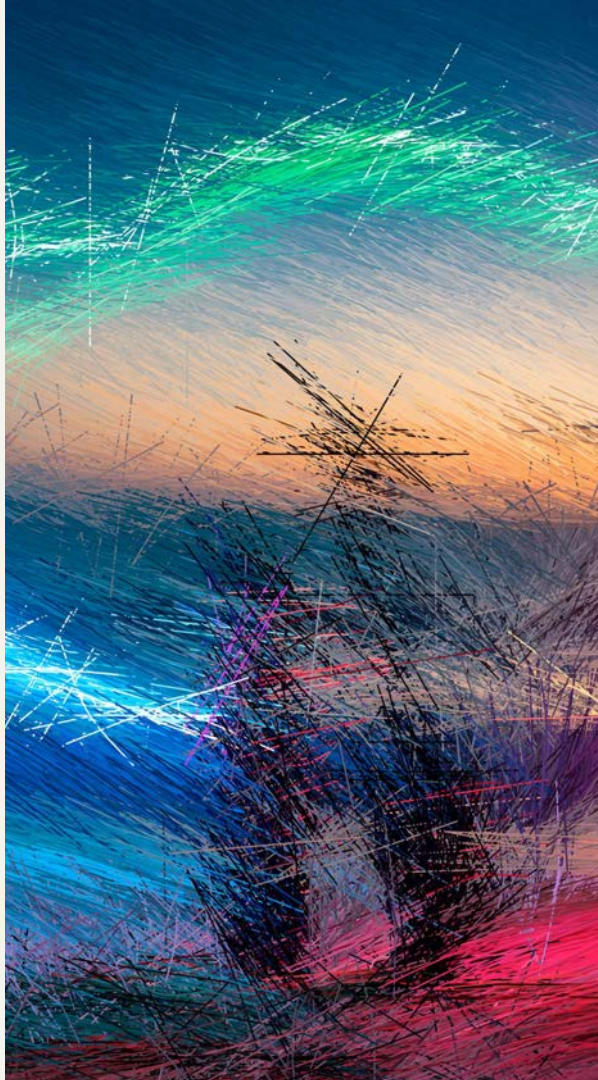
Repeatability

Execution at Scale

Design once, execute unlimited times. Each successful workflow becomes a self-contained system.

- Can be run many times with different inputs.
- Duplicate and adapt your workflow for new contexts.
- Branch for parallel variations, ideation and exploration.
- Share proven processes across teams.

Result: Scale what works. The effort to execute stays constant while output multiplies.



Core components of a workflow

Core components of a workflow

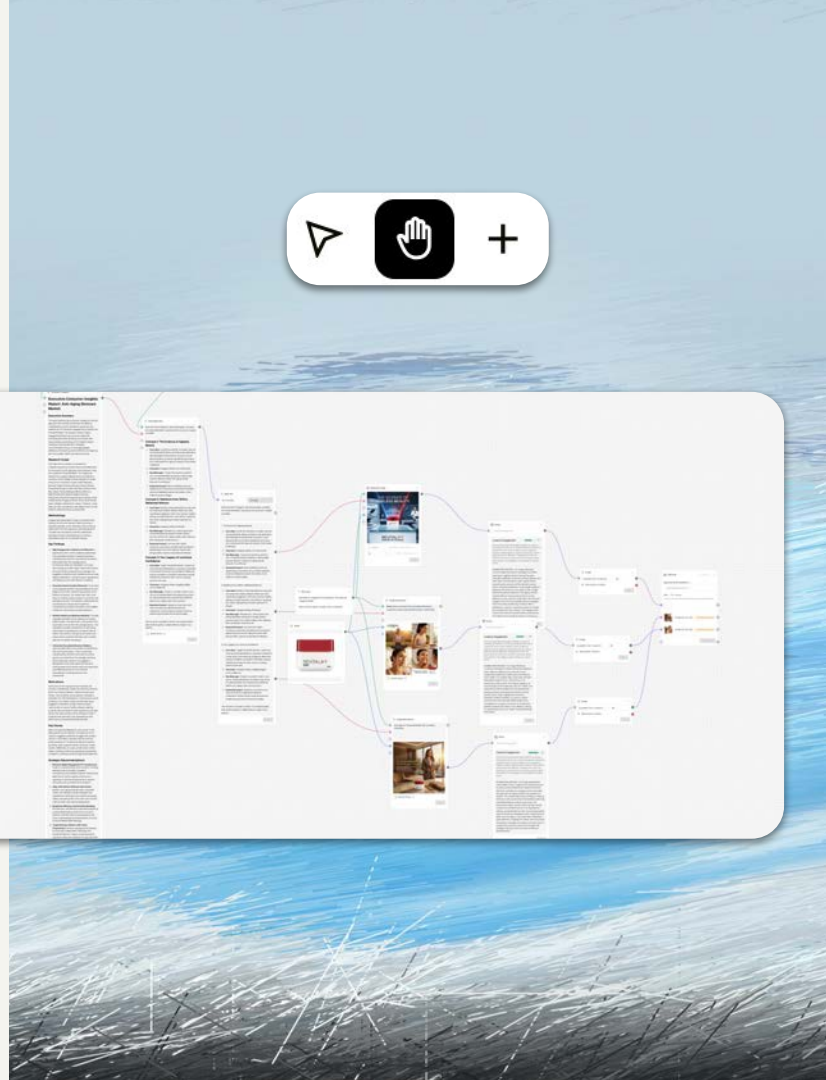
The Workflow Canvas

Your Visual Design Space

An infinite canvas where you build workflows by arranging and connecting nodes.

- **Add nodes:** Double-click anywhere or click the **+** icon.
- **Navigate:** Use the hand tool to drag around the canvas. Use the pointer tool to select and edit nodes.
- **Zoom:** Use Ctrl+scroll on Windows or Cmd+scroll on Mac to zoom in on the details of your work or zoom out for the big-picture overview.

```
Workflows can be as simple or complex as you need. The canvas adapts to your process.
```



Core components of a workflow

Nodes & node types

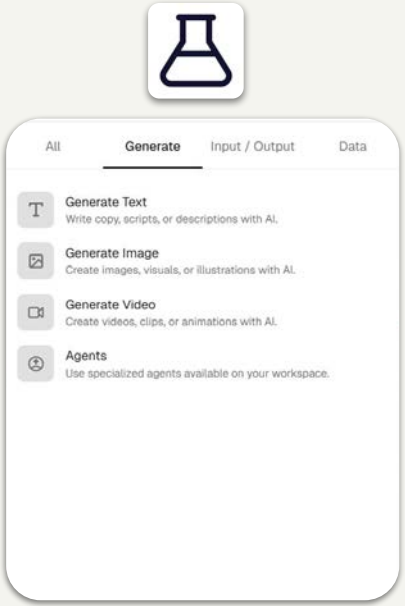
The building blocks of your workflow.

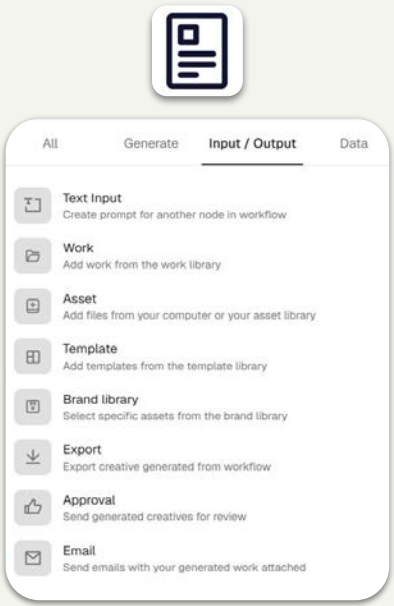
There are a variety of different node types, so you can find what you need at every step of your workflow.

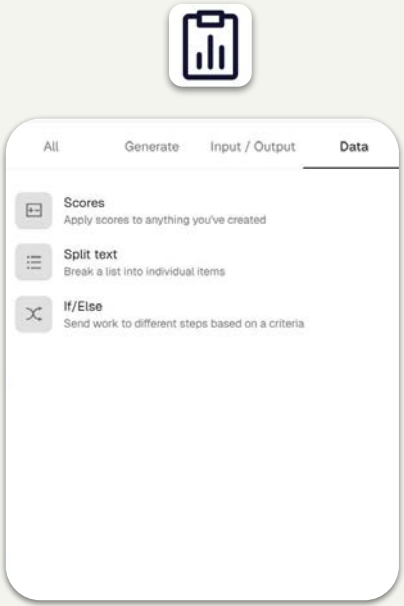
Each node handles **one operation**. This keeps things understandable, and reduces the chances of failure due to complex or convoluted instructions overwhelming a single model.

`Connect them to build your process flow.`

`The three node types: Generate; Input/Output & Data`







Core components of a workflow

Connections: channeling the flow

Four connection types, colour-coded

Connections define the order in which your workflow executes when you run it. They determine what information passes between nodes. Outputs from models and agents in one step become the inputs for the next. Different node types allow (or, in some cases, require) different types of input and output connection types. These are **colour-coded** as follows:

- **Green** Text-based instructions that tell a node what to do. Generation nodes (agents, generate image/video/text) always require these text prompts. Other nodes may not need them.
- **Pink** Context and supporting information that helps nodes work better: text files, documents, brand guidelines, or outputs from previous steps.
- **Blue** Visual or media references—images, videos, character references, product shots, style examples.
- **Purple** Useful for adding a reference to a specific output, asset, or deliverable for the next stage in the workflow.

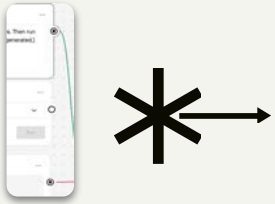
Node-level configuration

Configure each node independently with its own prompts, context, and attachments. You can modify one step without affecting others, and see exactly what inputs and data each stage receives.

Core components of a workflow

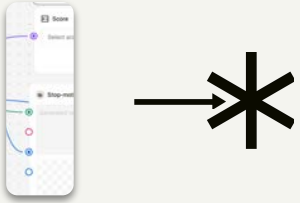
Connections: channeling the flow

Wiring up your workflow

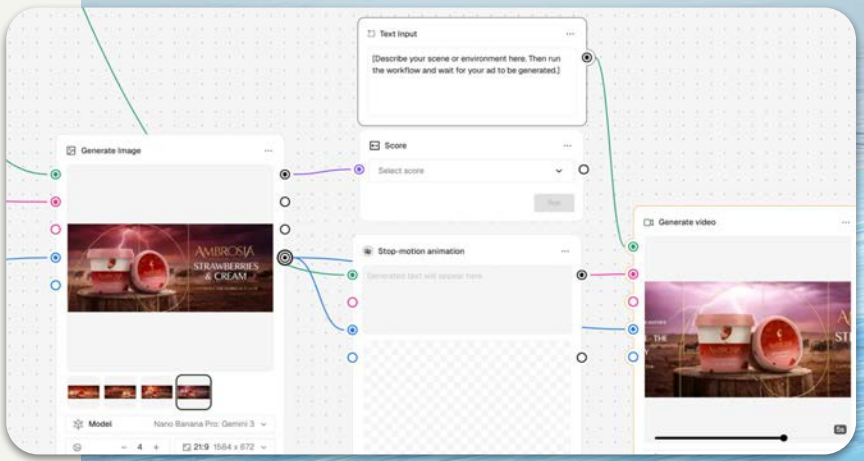


Outputs are on the **right** side of nodes.

Inputs are on the **left** side of nodes.



Drag and drop from an output pin to the appropriate input pin on the next node in your workflow.



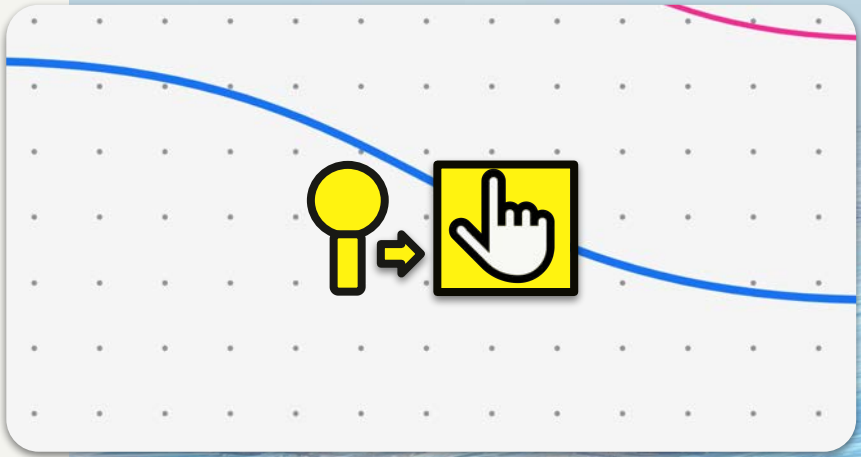
Note: Some nodes (like Work, Asset, Text input) only have output pins. These are source nodes that provide inputs to downstream steps.

Core components of a workflow

Removing or deleting connections

You can remove individual connection wires without deleting entire nodes.

- Zoom right in on the connection using **CTRL + Mouse Scroll** (or via two-finger scroll on a trackpad).
- Your cursor will become a hand point gesture. Click on the wire. The connection wire will now appear **bolder**, confirming that it's selected.
- Press the **Delete** key on your keyboard to remove it.



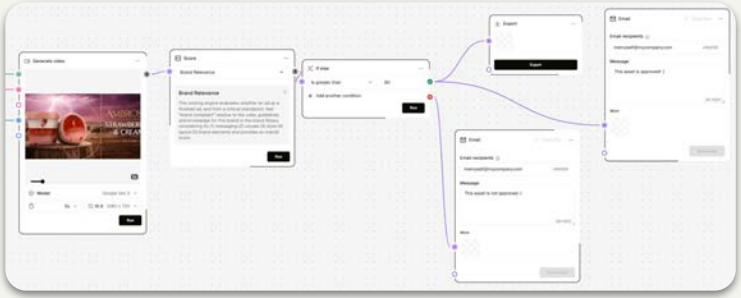
More Workflows Tips:

- You can easily duplicate any node using its three dots [...] menu.
- Drag a box around multiple nodes to move them around the canvas all at once.

Core components of a workflow

Human in the loop

Quality control in Pencil Workflows is structural, not reactive. You decide where judgement happens—human or automated—and the system enforces it every time.



Insert guardrails, checks-and-balances, human reviews, or automated scoring frameworks at any stage

Workflows let you insert quality gates wherever your process needs them.

Approval and email nodes
Pause your workflow execution pending human review and approval. Send drafts as attachments to stakeholders for QA, brand compliance checks before publishing. You can then add If/Else nodes to route the workflow based on the outcomes of these reviews.

Scores nodes: automated assessment
Apply AI-powered quality scoring to evaluate outputs. Available scores vary by workspace and may include creative engagement, brand relevance, and other media performance metrics.

Core components of a workflow

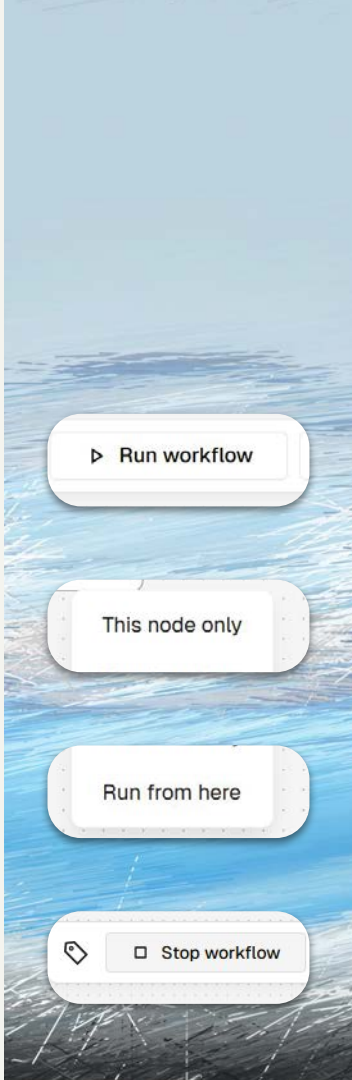
Running workflows

Execution controls

Workflows can be executed in two ways, giving you precise control over testing and iteration.

- **Run workflow**
  Executes the entire sequence from start to finish. Use this when you want the complete output.
- **Run this node only**
  Tests a single node in isolation. Useful for validating individual steps without re-running the entire workflow.
- **Run from here**
  Executes the selected node and all downstream steps. Allows you to iterate on later stages without re-running stable upstream work.

Once a workflow run starts, inputs can't be modified. If you make any changes, you can re-run it from that point onwards, or run the entire workflow again. You can hit **Stop Workflow** to interrupt execution.



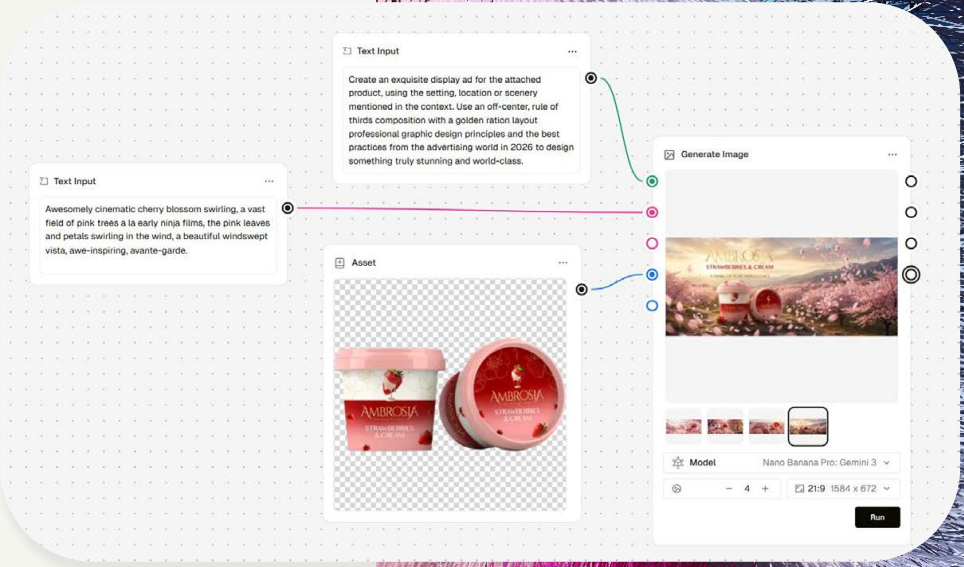
Building a workflow
from scratch

Building a simple workflow from scratch

Let’s walk through the process of setting up your first workflow, starting from an empty workflow canvas.

For this example, we'll build a simple workflow that **creates an ad** in any **scene or environment** that you specify.

Why start from scratch? While Workflow Templates form an idea starting point for most use-cases, it’s a good idea to build a workflow from scratch to fully understand how nodes and connections work in the Pencil context.



Building a simple workflow from scratch

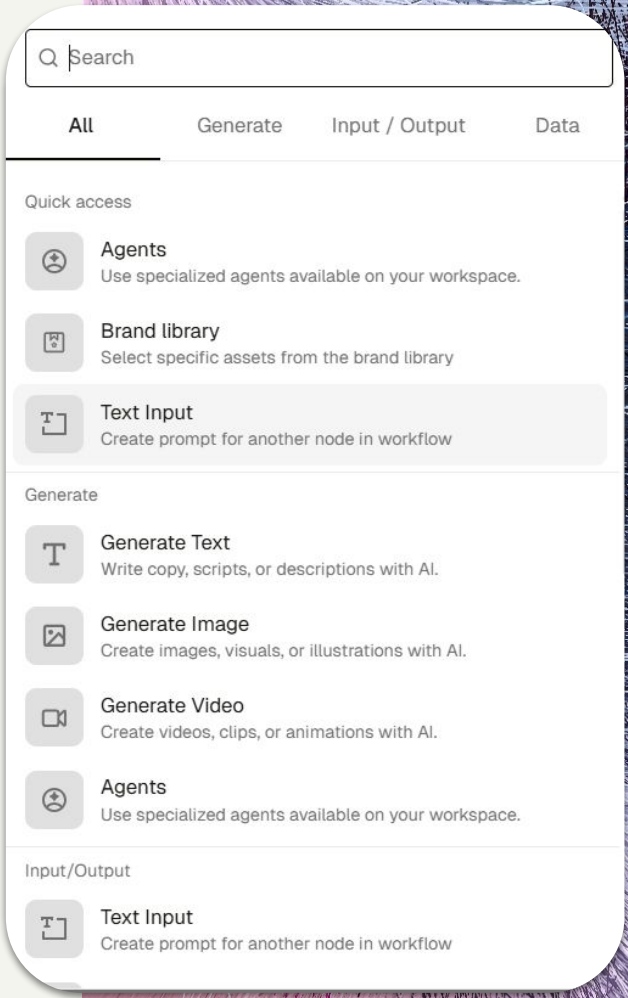
Step 1: Add a Text Input node

Action: Use the Plus (+) icon at the bottom of the page, or double click anywhere on the empty canvas to add your first node.

Choose Text Input node.

Why? This will serve as the field where the user inputs their desired location for the ad that the workflow will generate.

This is the starting point of our workflow and all other instructions will sit downstream from this first node, and be affected by it.



If you change the text prompt in the starting node, you'll need to run the workflow again to see the results in action.

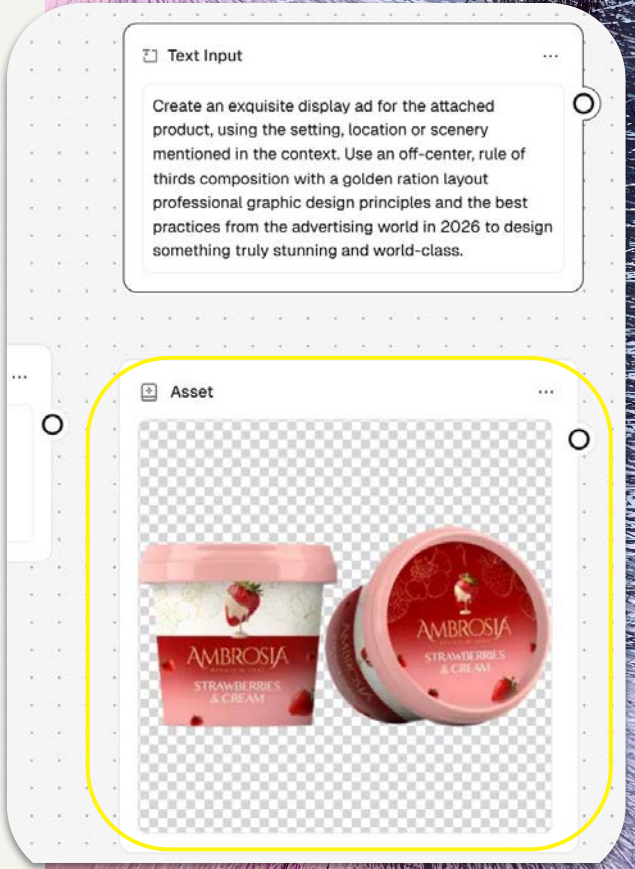
Building a simple workflow from scratch

Step 2: Add an Asset node

Action: Use the same method to add an Asset node to your canvas. This let's you choose a previously created, approved brand asset to use in your ad. **Add** or **Upload** an asset. Don't connect any nodes just yet.

Why? The asset in this example is simply a product shot that we will pass to the image model downstream as a reference when generating the ad.

AI knows how to talk to AI! If you're not sure how to write your node instructions, you can try chat to a custom Pencil AI agent in another browser tab. Describe what you need in plain language, and have the agent convert it into detailed, formal instructions. Check it first before pasting into your workflow though, as AI can make mistakes.



Building a simple workflow from scratch

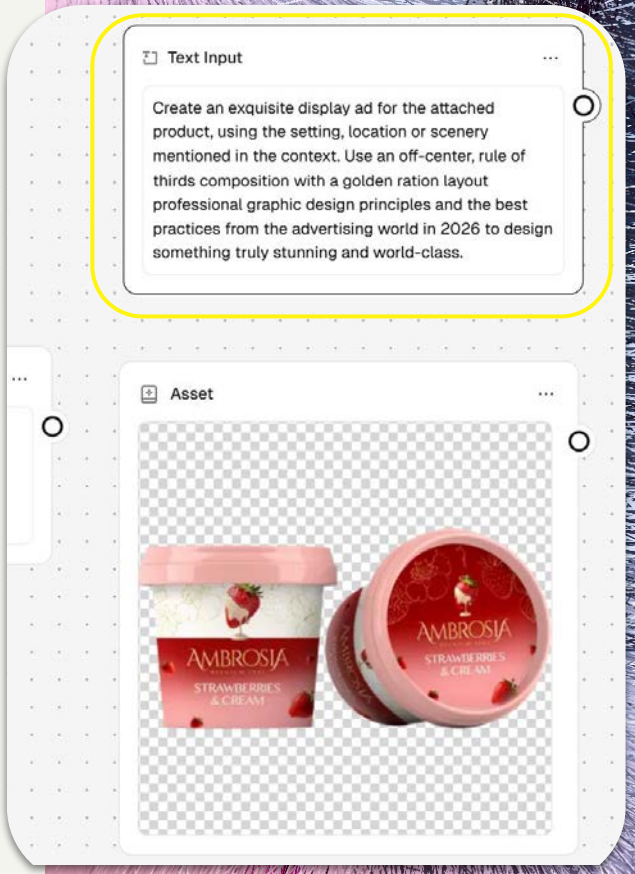
Step 3: Add another Text Input node

Action: Add a second **text input node** to your canvas. Write a master prompt to describe your ad. Bear in mind that the product and location are already set by the two previous nodes.

Once again, don’t connect any nodes to each other yet. We’ll be wiring everything up in the next steps.

Why? The power of Workflows lies in the ability to **quickly iterate** on new ideas.

We’re front-loading the work of describing the ad in a general sense, so that in future we can just change the location in the first node to quickly generate a whole new set of high quality ad ideas in a new environment or scene.

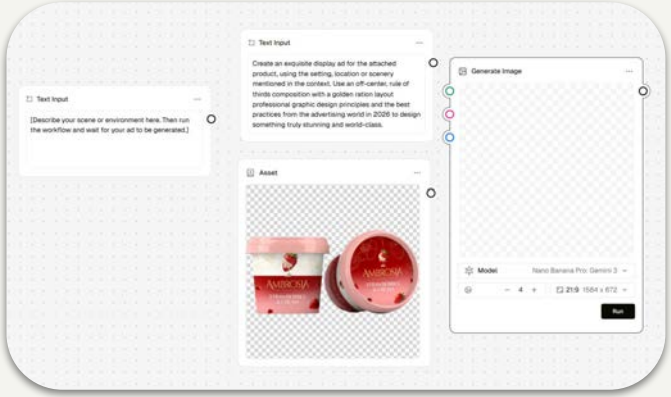


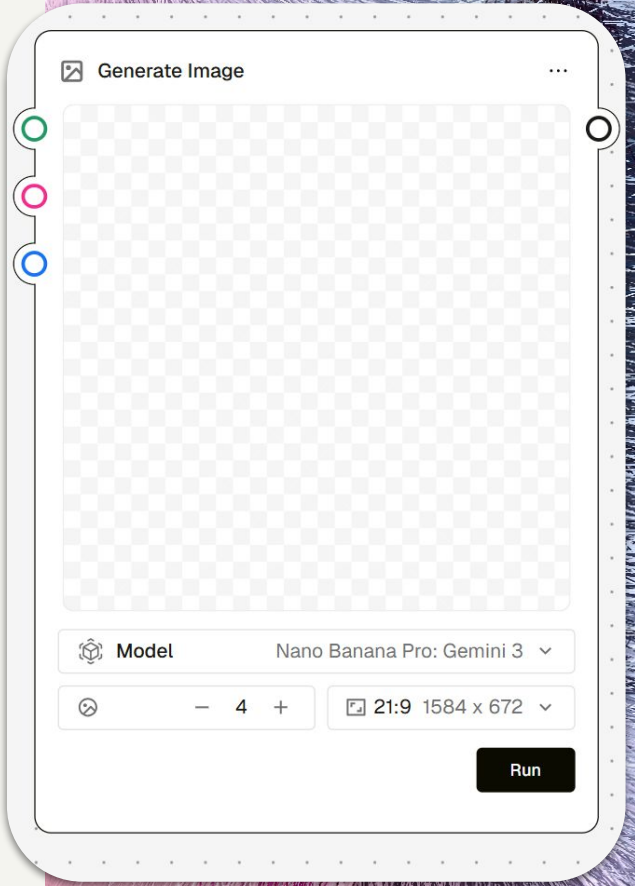
Building a simple workflow from scratch

Step 4: Add a Generate Image node

Action: Add a **Generate Image** node, which you'll find in the **Generate** category. Choose an image model, such as Nano Banana Pro, and select your ad's aspect ratio. You can also specify how many generations you want per run.

Why? This is the nucleus of the example workflow, where the real work of generating the image ads gets done. Next, we'll connect the text inputs and image reference from the previous steps.





Building a simple workflow from scratch

Step 5: Connect your nodes

Action: Now we wire up our workflow by connecting the nodes. Drag a wire out from your original **Text Input** node's black output pin, and connect it to the **Image Generator** node's pink (second) input pin.

Then wire the master prompt, (the second **Text Input** node we added in step three) into the **Image Generator** node's top green input pin the same way.

Lastly, we connect the **Asset's** output pin to one of the **Image Generator's** blue attachment input pins.

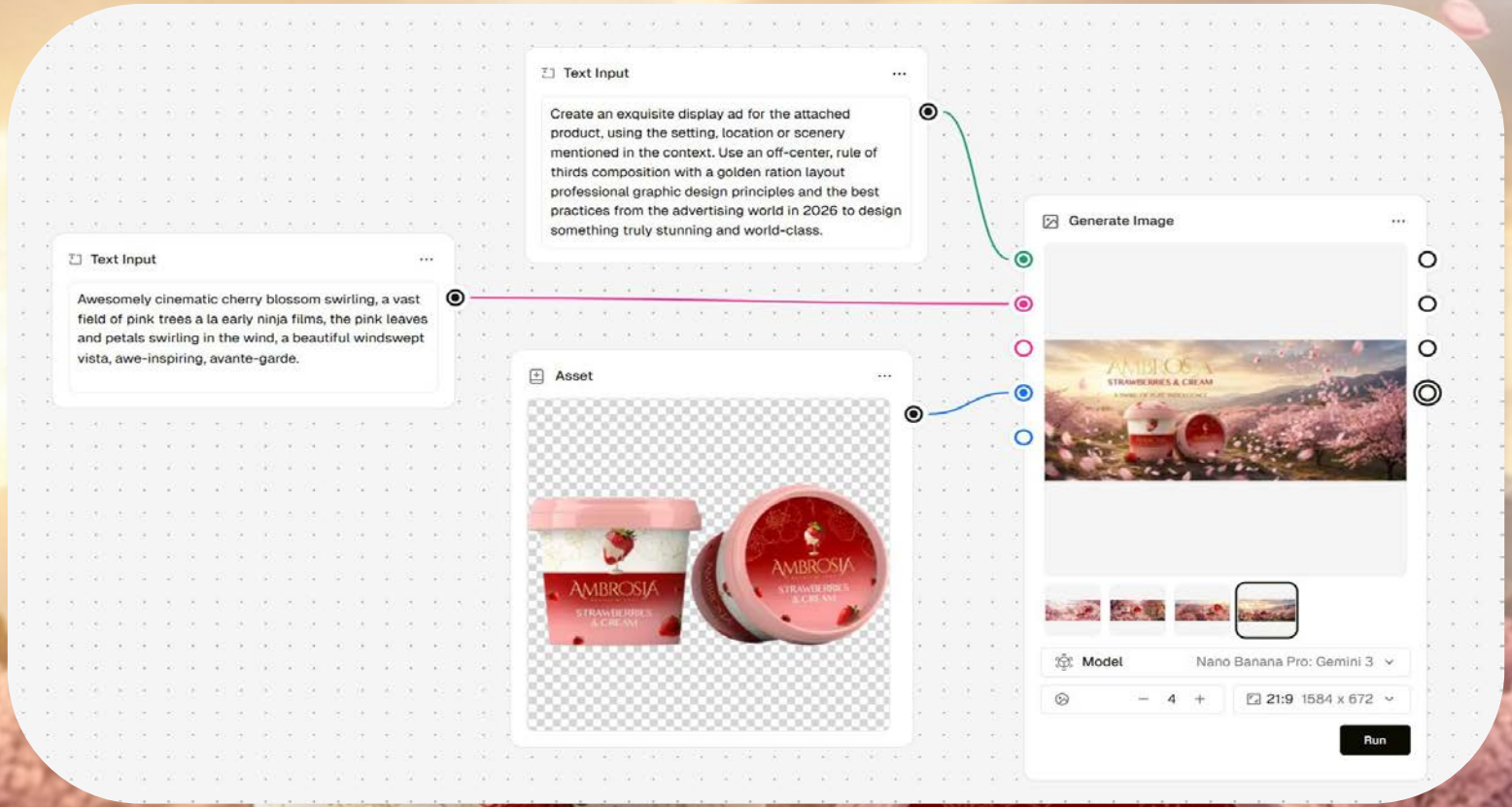
That's it! Now you can type in any setting or location in your first node and **Run the Workflow.**

Why? We're essentially telling the image model to use the prompt from the second node, and use the image from the third node as a reference, all while staying grounded in the context from the first node.

A quick reminder:

- **Green** is for text-based inputs or written prompts.
- **Pink** is for context; such as text, files, images or brand assets.
- **Blue** is for attachments, such as character or product references.
- **Purple** is for works; outputs, assets or deliverables.

Building a simple workflow from scratch



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STRAWBERRIES
& CREAM
The World's Most Exquisite Indulgence

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& CREAM
TASTE THE COSMOS

AMBROSIA
TIMELESS TASTE OF GOLD

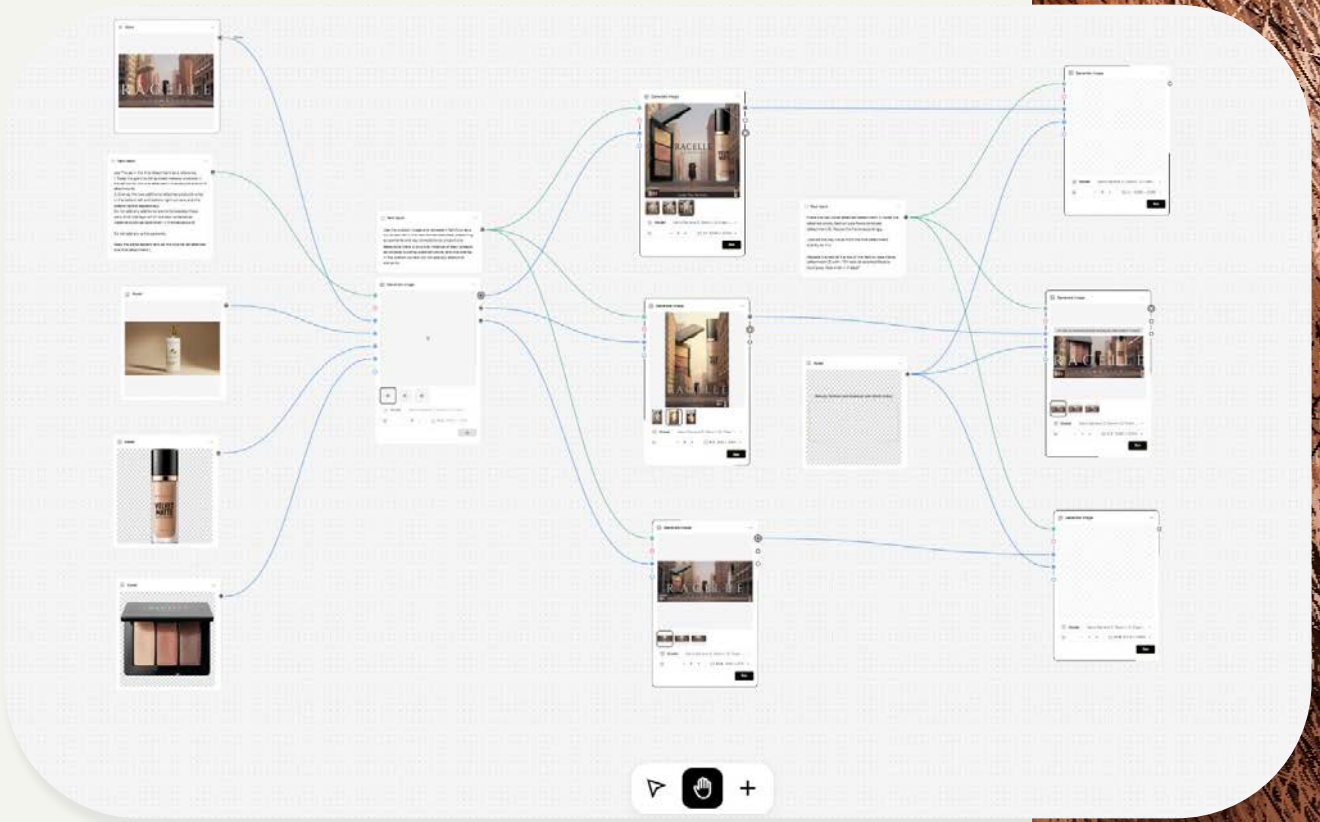
AMBROSIA
STRAWBERRIES
& CREAM

TASTE THE
COSMIC DIVINE
STRAWBERRIES & CREAM
FROM THE ASTRAL GARDENS

ZANZIBAR SUNSET.

Taste the Universe
Ambrosia. Astral Gardens. 2026.

Building a more advanced workflow

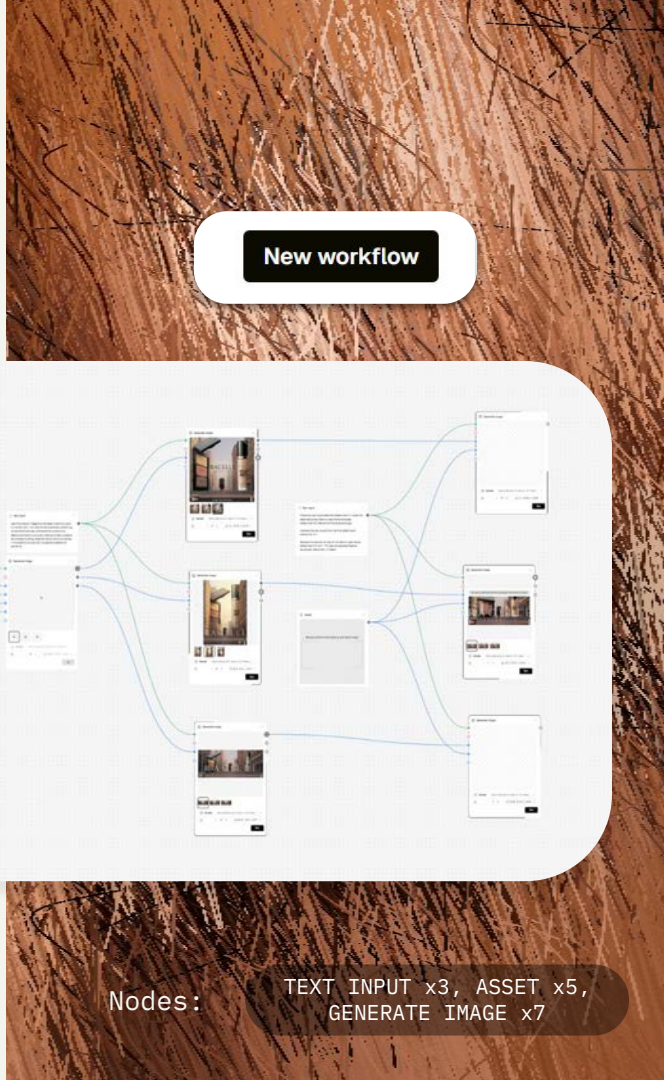


Building a more advanced workflow

For the next example, we'll build out a more powerful, production-ready **product swap & resizing workflow.**

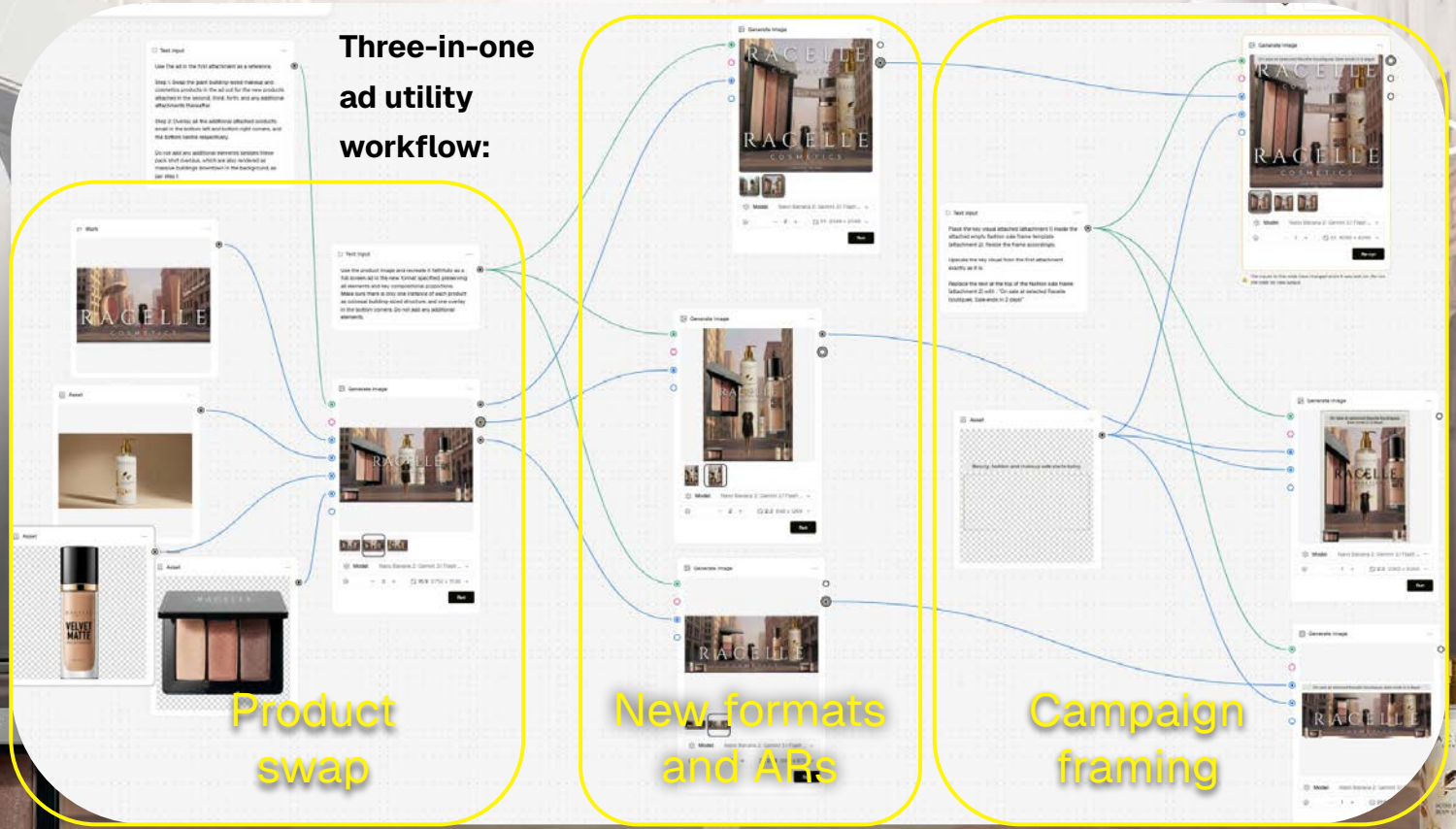
Imagine you have an ad that's working. Now you want to scale it, swap out the product shots, resize it across multiple aspect ratio formats, and then, finally, overlay a branded frame onto each new format. This custom workflow does all three in a single run.

What this workflow does: Users supply reference images and text prompts. The workflow chains element swaps in sequence, branches into parallel generation steps for each ad format, then applies a frame overlay where needed.



Building a more advanced workflow

Three-in-one ad utility workflow:



Racelle

RACELLE
VELVET MATTE
Sale now on!
RACELLE
COSMETICS
Larger than life looks

On sale at selected Racelle boutiques.
Sale ends in 2 days!
Sale now on!
RACELLE
VELVET MATTE
RACELLE
COSMETICS

Racelle

On sale at selected Racelle boutiques. Sale ends in 2 days!
RACELLE
VELVET MATTE
RACELLE
COSMETICS
Larger than life looks

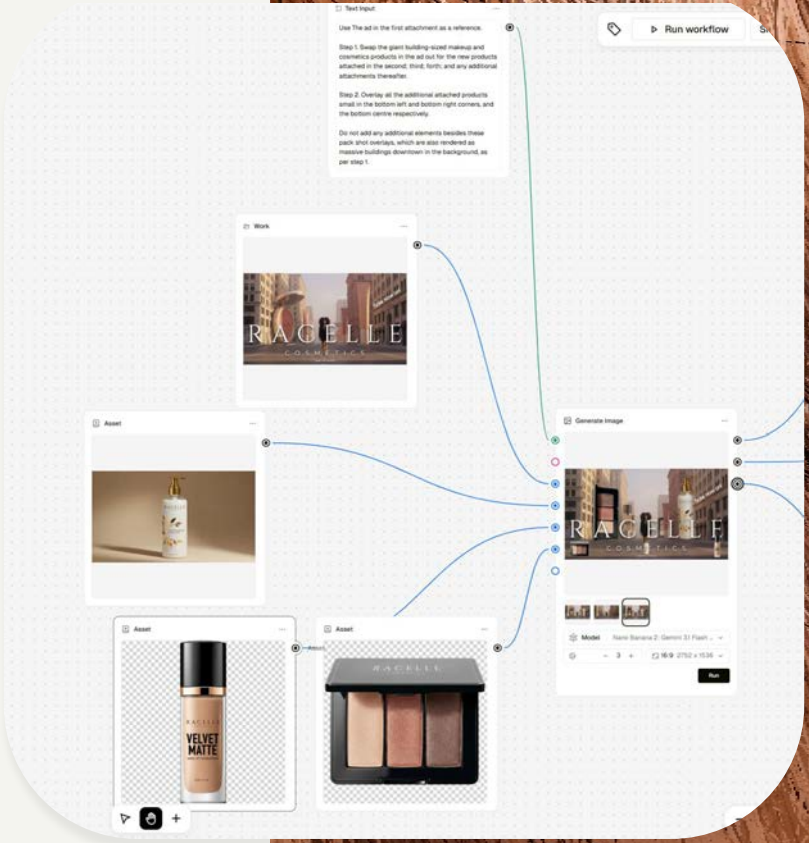
Building a more advanced workflow

Stage 1 - Product swap:

First, we replace specific product instances in your ad with other products from your brand asset collection.

Your original ad feeds is added to a Text Input describing the swap, alongside Asset nodes for each new product.

These are then fed into a Generate Image node, which produces a new version of the ad with the swapped product in place.

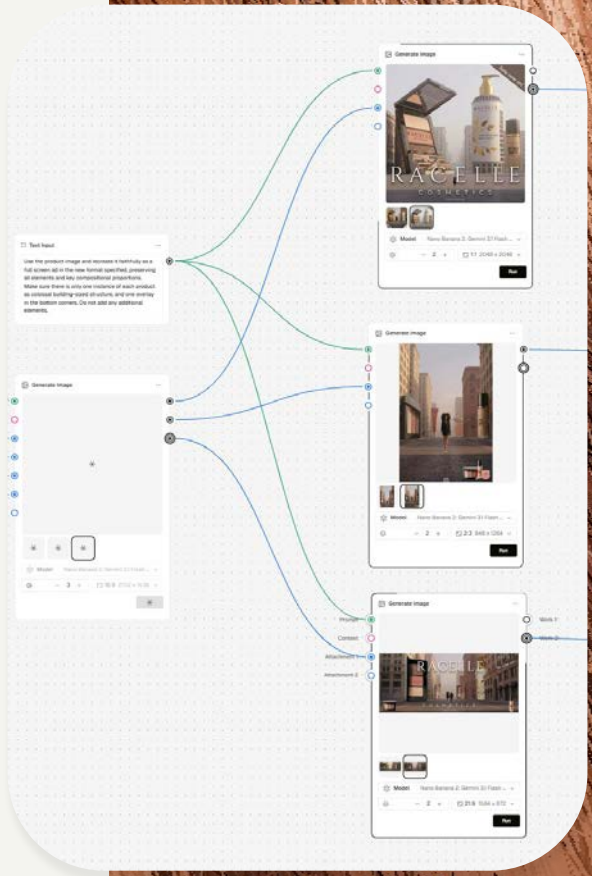


Building a more advanced workflow

Stage 2 - Resize across formats:

The swapped ad then branches into parallel Generate Image nodes, each targeting a different size and aspect ratio.

The AI re-composes the layout to suit each new canvas’ aspect ratio.

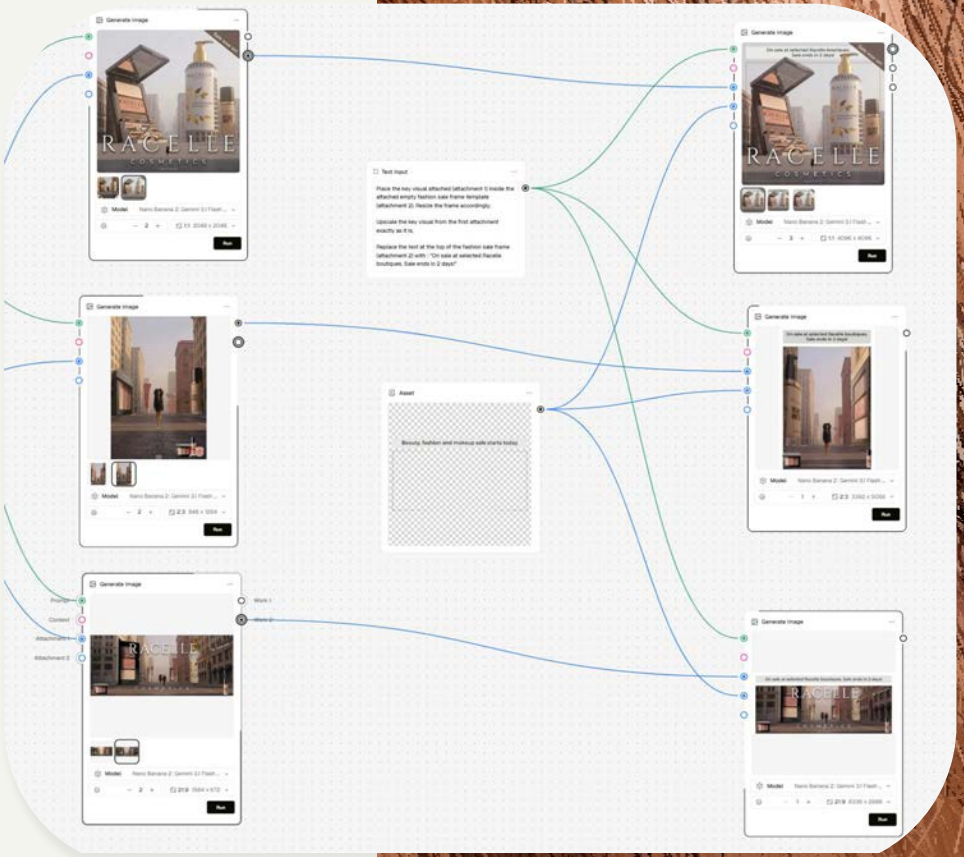


Building a more advanced workflow

Stage 3 - Frame overlay:

The final step applies a branded or campaign-based frame to each resized output.

This method keeps your image quality coherent, and your identity on-band and CI-compliant across every aspect ratio and format.



Workflow
management

Workflow management

Organising your workflows

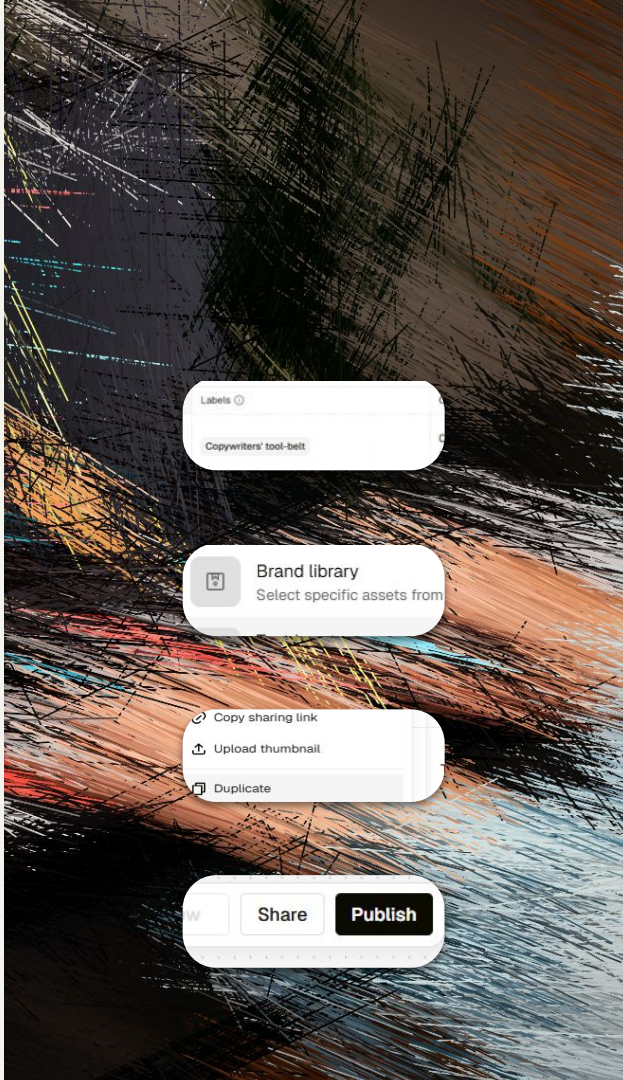
Tools for keeping workflows organised, on-brand, and collaborative.

Labels
Tag workflows by campaign, client, content type, or stage. Makes filtering and search easier as your workflow library grows.

Brand library integration
Enable brand library access for agents to reference guidelines automatically, or pass specific assets directly through nodes for precision control.

Duplicate and share
View, create, and edit workflows based on your role. Duplicate any workflow to adapt it for your own needs.

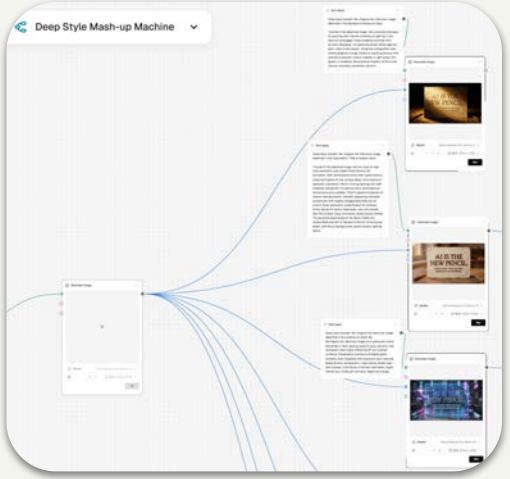
Publishing and saving
Click publish to enable auto-save. All future changes will now save automatically.



Workflow management

Limitations and considerations

Workflows have specific constraints that ensure consistency and auditability.



Sequential execution
Workflows execute steps in order. Parallel execution chains in your workflows will run sequentially, starting from the top output pins, working its way down, one execution chain at a time.

Input limits
Attachments and context are limited to ten items total **per node**. The number of attachments will also depend on the node's specific model or agent. There is no workflow-level limit on attachments though, so go wild!

Workflow ownership
Workflows are collaborative by default and anyone within the same workspace can access and edit them, once published. As such you'll want to iterate carefully, and first duplicate a stable workflow before making any experimental changes to it.

Agent dependencies
Workflows rely on the agents they reference. If an agent is modified or removed, future workflow runs may be affected.

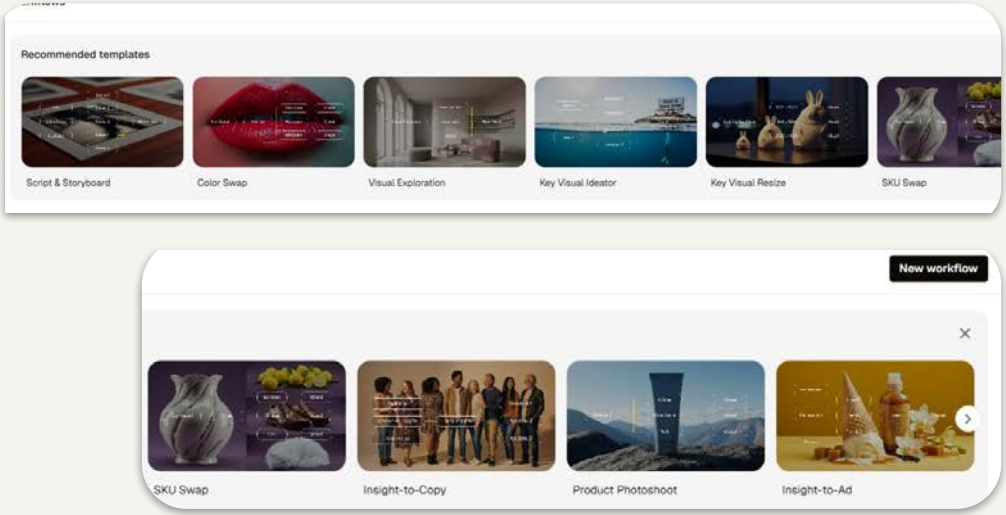
The nine Templates

The nine Templates

Tailored for the full range of creative production tasks

These templates span the full range of creative production: from strategic insight to finished asset, from single-SKU variation to campaign-level ideation.

Each one is a starting point, not a prescription. Use them as-is, adapt the node structure, or combine them into larger flows.



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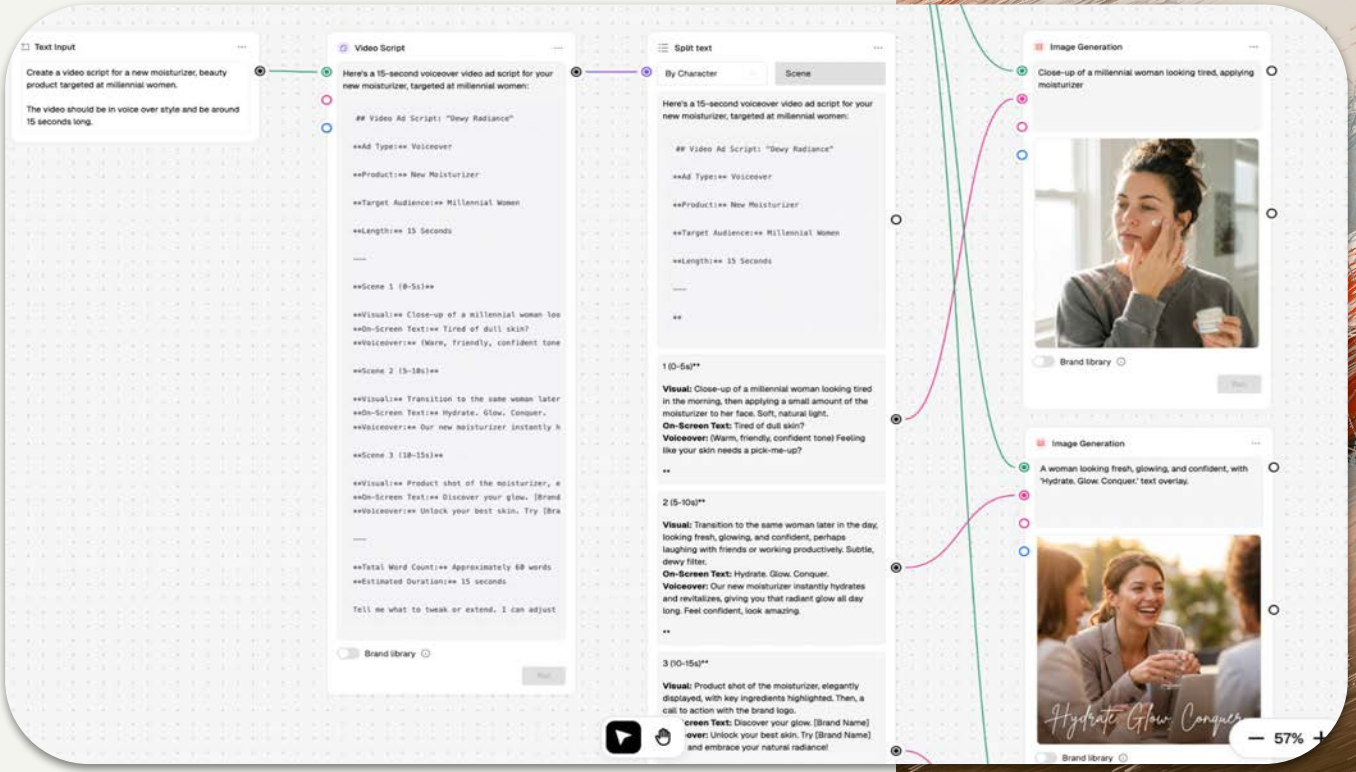
Script & Storyboard Template



The nine Templates

Script & Storyboard Template

What this Workflow is
This workflow addresses one of the most common creative production challenges: adapting assets across formats without compromising composition.

Instead of manually resizing and reworking layouts, it intelligently preserves visual hierarchy, focal points, and brand integrity across multiple formats.

How it works

A single key visual is automatically adapted into multiple aspect ratios while protecting:

- The primary focal point (product or hero subject)
- Product clarity and readability
- Layout structure and visual balance

The system ensures that each variation remains compositionally sound, rather than simply cropped or stretched.

This workflow is ideal for:

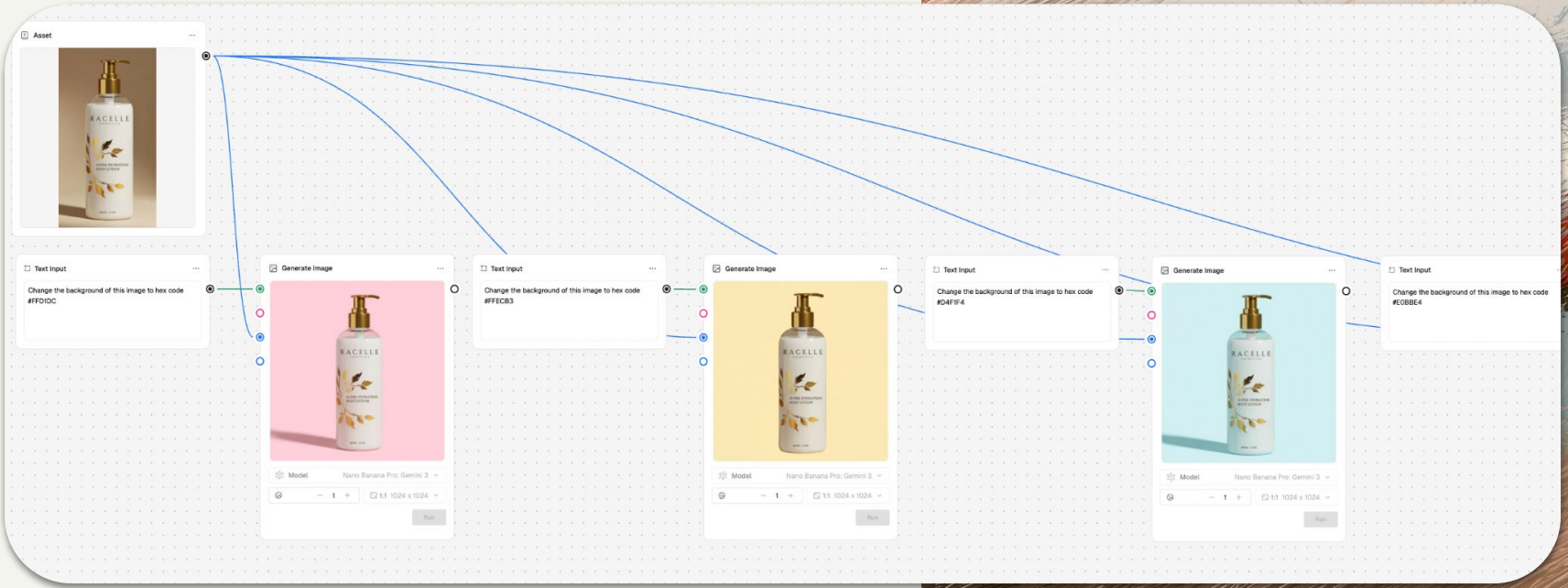
- Paid media campaigns
- Social platform variations
- Retailer and marketplace specifications

Best practices:

✓ Clearly define the hero element before generating variations
✓ Use outputs as layout-ready drafts
✓ Refine further in the editor when pixel-level adjustments are required

The nine Templates

Colour Swap



The nine Templates

Colour Swap

What this Workflow Is

This workflow enables precise, controlled colour variation without compromising creative integrity.

Designed for scenarios where colour needs to change, but all else must remain consistent. The goal is precision, not reinterpretation.

How it works

Users provide a specific hex code or colour reference.

The workflow applies that colour exactly to defined elements while preserving material realism, natural lighting behaviour, surface texture, finish, and overall composition.

The system adjusts the selected areas without introducing stylistic drift or unintended aesthetic changes.

Ideal for:

- Brand system testing and palette validation
- Packaging rollouts across SKUs
- Retailer-specific colour adaptations
- Compliance or regulatory-driven updates

Best practices:

✓ Clearly define which elements should change and which must remain untouched
✓ Use exact hex codes to ensure brand accuracy
✓ Review edge transitions to confirm clean application
✓ Treat outputs as production-ready variations, with optional final QA

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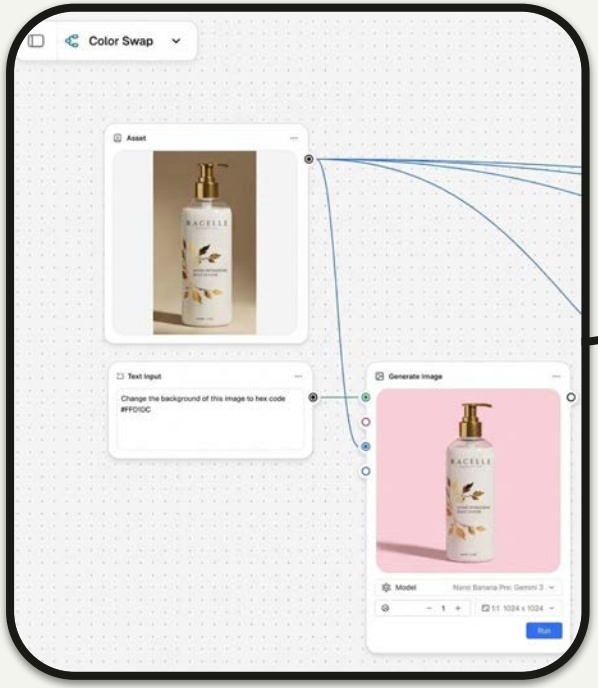
How we built
the Colour Swap:

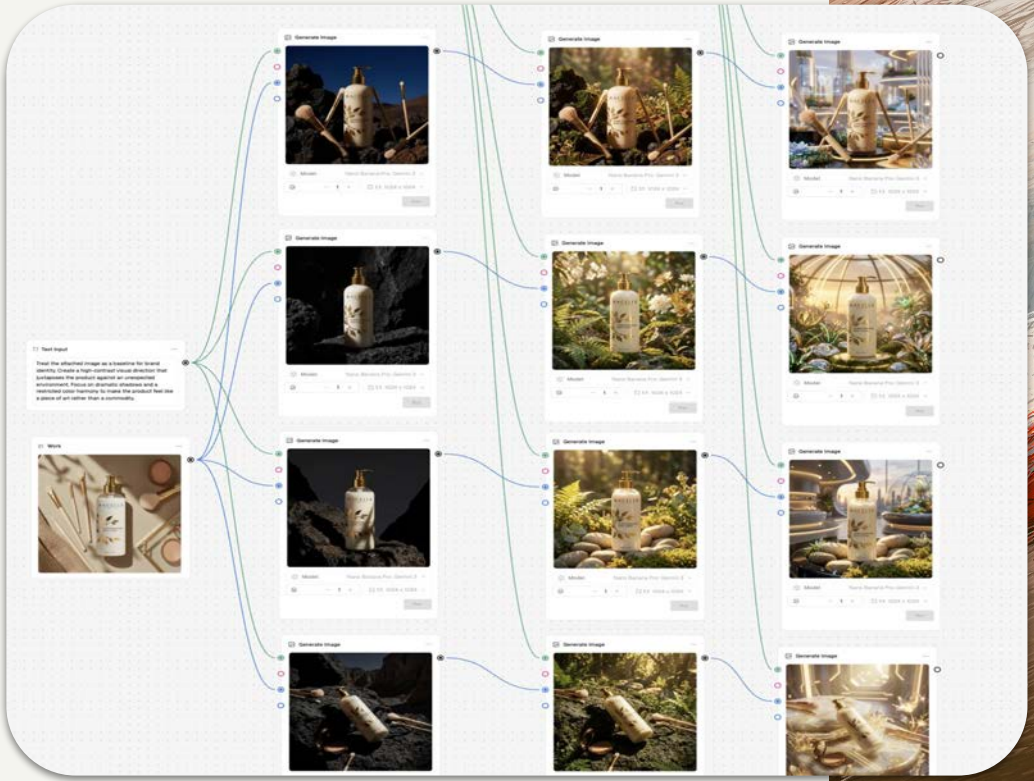


What's happening in the workflow:

1. **One Asset → Infinite Variations**:
   - Different brand color palettes
   - Campaign themes
   - Seasonal promotions
   - A/B testing needs
2. **No Design or Photoshop Skills Required**
   - Manual masking
   - Layer editing
   - Re-exporting assets
3. **Faster Creative Iteration**
   - Marketing teams can experiment freely
   - Creative decisions are made visually, not hypothetically
   - Iterations happen without rework
4. **Brand Consistency at Scale**
   - Product appearance remains consistent
   - Only controlled elements (background color) change
   - Visual identity stays aligned across channels
5. **Ready for Multi-Channel Use**
   - Website product pages
   - Paid ads
   - Social media creatives

The nine Templates

Visual Exploration



The nine Templates

Visual Exploration

What this Workflow is

This workflow enables structured creative exploration grounded in an existing visual language.

Rather than starting from a blank canvas, it allows teams to extend, reinterpret, or scale a proven aesthetic across new outputs — while maintaining coherence and brand integrity.

How it works

Users provide one or more visual references. The workflow analyzes and extracts key stylistic signals, including: Lighting direction and contrast; Composition and framing; Colour palette and tonal range; Mood and visual atmosphere; Material and texture treatment

These extracted cues are then applied to newly generated visuals, ensuring stylistic alignment without direct replication.

The result is fresh creative work that feels intentional and connected to the original visual system.

Ideal for:

- Maintaining brand consistency across campaigns
- Extending a campaign into new formats or markets
- Onboarding new creative teams
- Translating mood boards into production-ready assets

Best practices:

✓ Clarify whether references are loose inspiration or strict visual rules.
✓ Select references that clearly represent the desired aesthetic (avoid mixed signals).
✓ Use multiple consistent references to strengthen output alignment.

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How we built Visual Exploration:

What's happening in this workflow:

Rather than replacing the asset, the AI builds on it, ensuring brand consistency across all outputs.

1. Creative exploration without creative risk

Teams can test bold visual ideas without committing resources upfront. This encourages experimentation that's often avoided due to cost or time constraints.

2. Art direction without technical execution

Users don't need to specify lighting setups, compositing steps, or scene construction. The AI converts abstract creative vision into concrete visuals, dramatically reducing friction between idea and execution.

3. Consistent brand identity across concepts

Because all outputs reference the same base image:

Product integrity is preserved

Branding stays intact

Visual experiments remain "on-brand," even when styles change dramatically

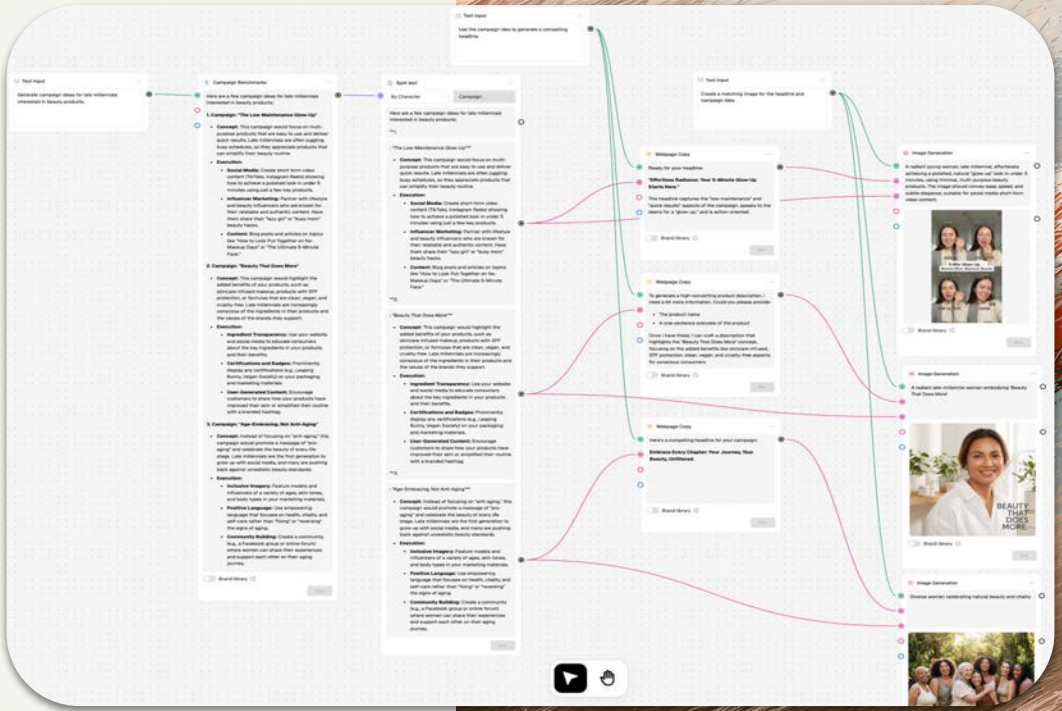
4. Faster Concepting for Campaigns & Pitching...

Is now achievable in minutes, making this workflow ideal for:

- Campaign ideation
- Creative reviews
- Client presentations
- Internal alignment

The nine Templates

Key Visual Ideator



The nine Templates

Key Visual Ideator

What this Workflow is

This workflow unifies strategic thinking and creative execution in a single, connected process.

It bridges the gap between concept and craft — ensuring that the visual is shaped by the idea, and the idea is strengthened by the visual. Rather than treating copy and design as separate stages, it develops them together.

How it works

A central creative idea generates multiple headline directions.

Each headline then informs the tone, composition, and energy of a corresponding static visual. Copy and image evolve in parallel — influencing each other rather than being developed in isolation.

This creates tighter conceptual alignment and reduces the disconnect that often happens when visuals are built after the messaging is finalized.

Ideal for:

- Social-first campaign development
- OOH concept exploration
- Early-stage creative sprints
- Internal reviews and stakeholder alignment

Best practices:

✓ Focus on strong directional headlines, not polished final copy

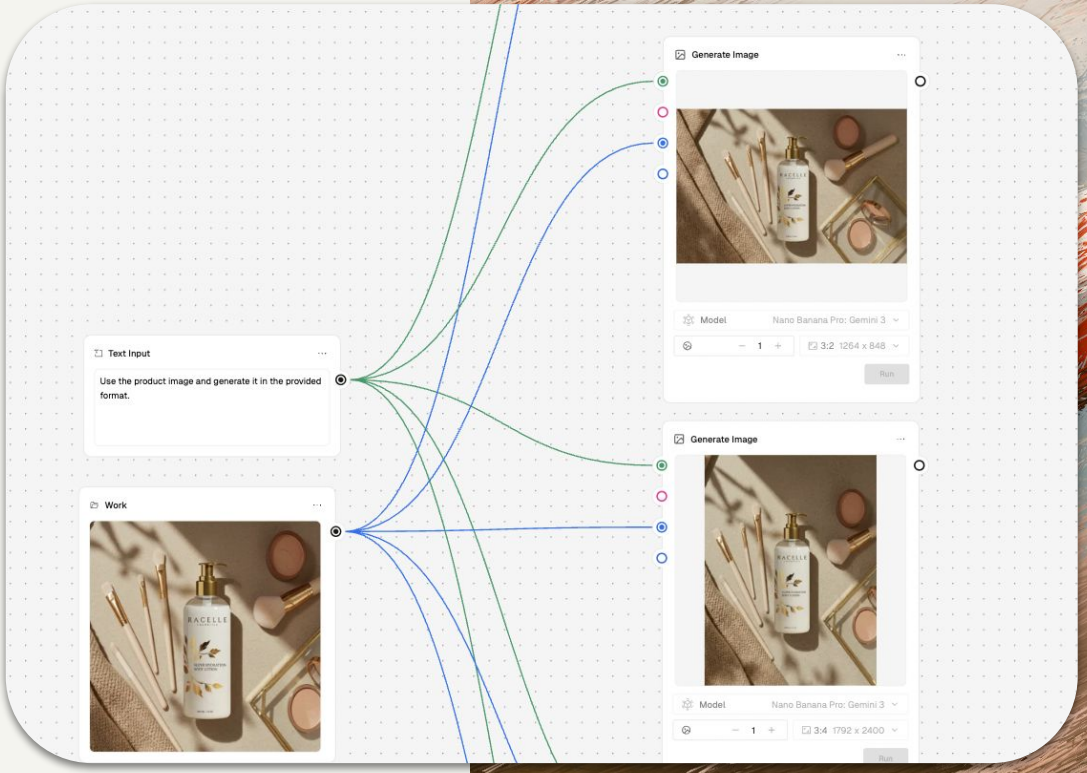
✓ Use headline variations to explore different creative territories

✓ Iterate by swapping or refining the line — not by rebuilding the entire visual system

✓ Treat outputs as concept-ready key visuals that can be refined further in production

The nine Templates

Key Visual Resize



The nine Templates

Key Visual Resize

What this Workflow is

Resizing is one of the most persistent production challenges. This workflow ensures that resizing does not dilute hierarchy, disrupt balance, or weaken the impact of the original key visual.

How it works

A single master key visual is intelligently adapted into multiple aspect ratios.

During adaptation, the workflow preserves:

- The primary focal point (hero element or product)
- Visual hierarchy and layout structure
- Product clarity and legibility
- Overall compositional balance

Rather than simply cropping or stretching, the system reinterprets the layout to maintain creative integrity across formats.

Ideal for:

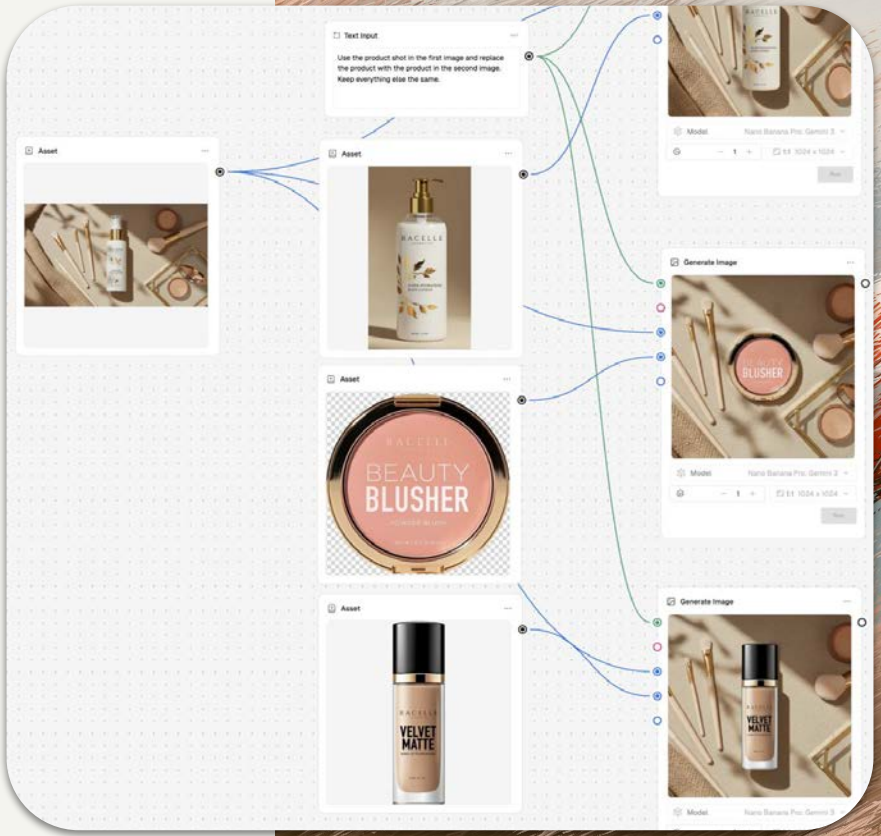
- Paid media variations
- Social platform requirements
- Retailer and marketplace specifications
- Multi-channel campaign rollouts

Best practices:

✓ Clearly define the hero element before generating variations
✓ Confirm safe zones for text and branding
✓ Review each format to ensure hierarchy still reads correctly
✓ Treat outputs as layout-ready drafts that can be refined further in the editor when precision adjustments are needed

The nine Templates

SKU Swap



The nine Templates

SKU Swap

What This Workflow Is

This workflow enables fast, controlled SKU replacement within a fixed visual composition. It allows brands to maintain a single approved creative setup — while seamlessly updating the product variant inside it. The composition stays consistent; the SKU changes.

How It Works

The original image establishes the creative foundation, including: lighting direction and intensity; camera angle and perspective; composition and framing; mood and overall atmosphere.

New SKUs are then swapped into that exact environment (individually or in batches) without altering the surrounding visual system. This ensures visual continuity across an entire product range.

Ideal for:

- Ecommerce product grids
- Range or line extensions
- Retailer-specific packaging variants
- Colourway or size variations
  Marketplace consistency requirements

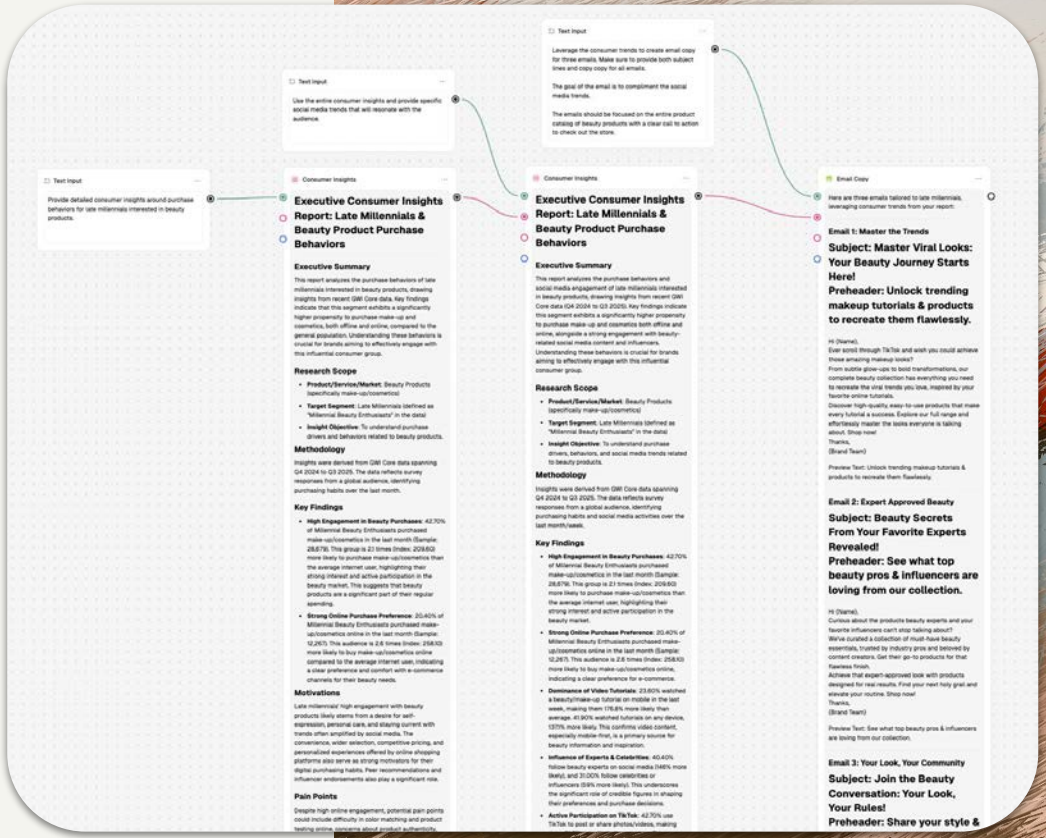
Best Practices:

✓ Use replacement products photographed from similar angles and perspectives
✓ Ensure scale and proportions match the original composition
✓ Review contact points, shadows, and reflections for realism
✓ Prioritize consistency over creative reinvention

This workflow performs best when the goal is uniformity, clarity, and range coherence, not open-ended creative experimentation.

The nine Templates

Insight to Copy



The nine Templates

Insight to Copy

What this Workflow is

This workflow is insight-led and copy-first.

It is designed to translate audience understanding into sharp, culturally relevant messaging without prematurely anchoring the process to visuals.

How it works

The workflow begins with clearly defined audience insights.

Those insights inform which cultural, behavioural, or category trends are most relevant. From there, the system generates copy lines that accurately reflect: Audience mindset; emotional drivers; cultural context and brand tone

The result is messaging that feels intentional and grounded, not generic or trend-chasing.

Ideal for:

- Early-stage copy exploration
- Tone-of-voice validation
- Campaign territory development
- Briefing internal or external creative teams

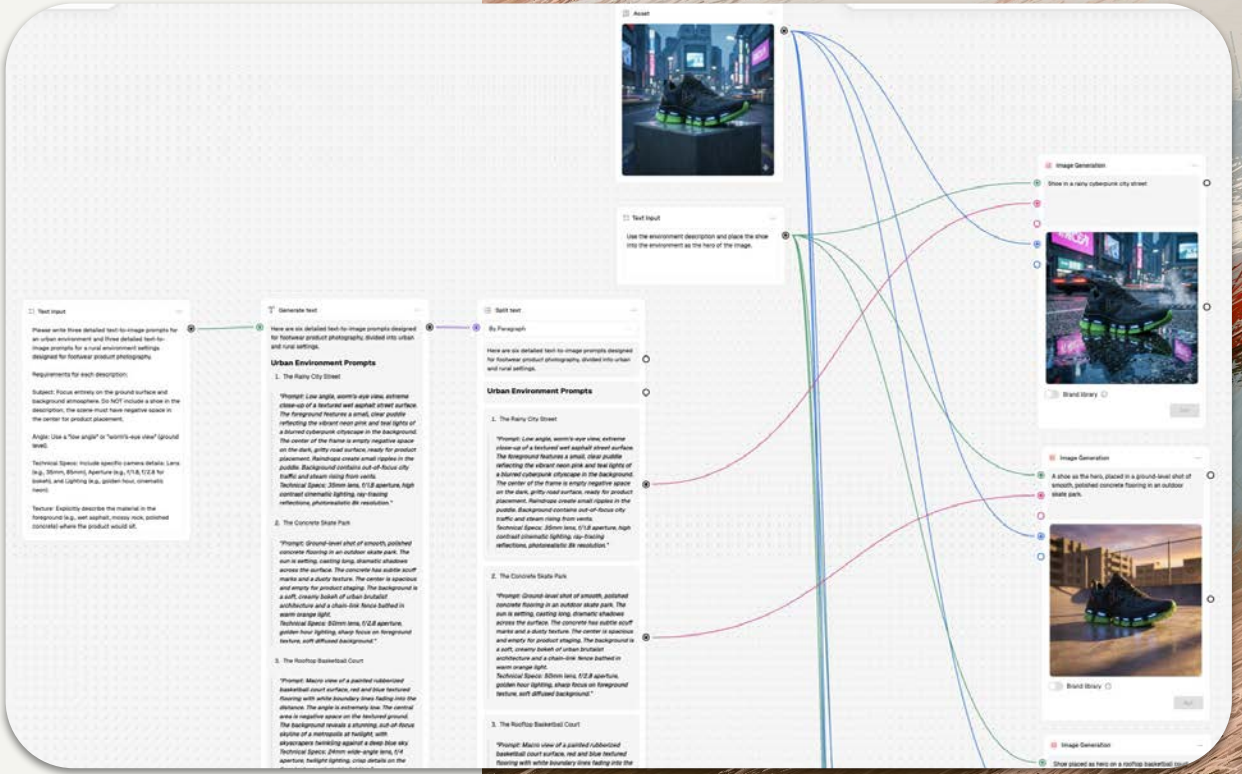
Best practices:

✓ Use this workflow before visual development begins.
✓ Define audience segments and behaviours as specifically as possible.
✓ Focus on directional strength, not final polish.
✓ Select and refine the strongest lines before moving into visual execution

The sharper the audience insight, the sharper the copy output.

The nine Templates

Product Photoshoot



The nine Templates

Product Photoshoot

What This Workflow Is

This workflow enables scalable environmental variation while preserving absolute product fidelity. The product remains the constant, controlled anchor — while the surrounding world evolves. It allows you to generate multiple contextual settings without compromising the integrity, proportions, or branding of the original product image.

In short: the product stays fixed, the environment adapts.

How it works

The approved product image serves as the visual foundation. From that anchor, the workflow generates multiple environmental contexts, such as: Lifestyle scenarios; seasonal setting variants; Usage-driven moments; market- or region-specific backdrops

Throughout this process, the product itself remains unchanged in shape, lighting logic, and detail — ensuring consistency across every variation.

Ideal for:

- PDP enhancements
- Seasonal campaign adaptations
- Regional or cultural localization
  Paid media creative variation

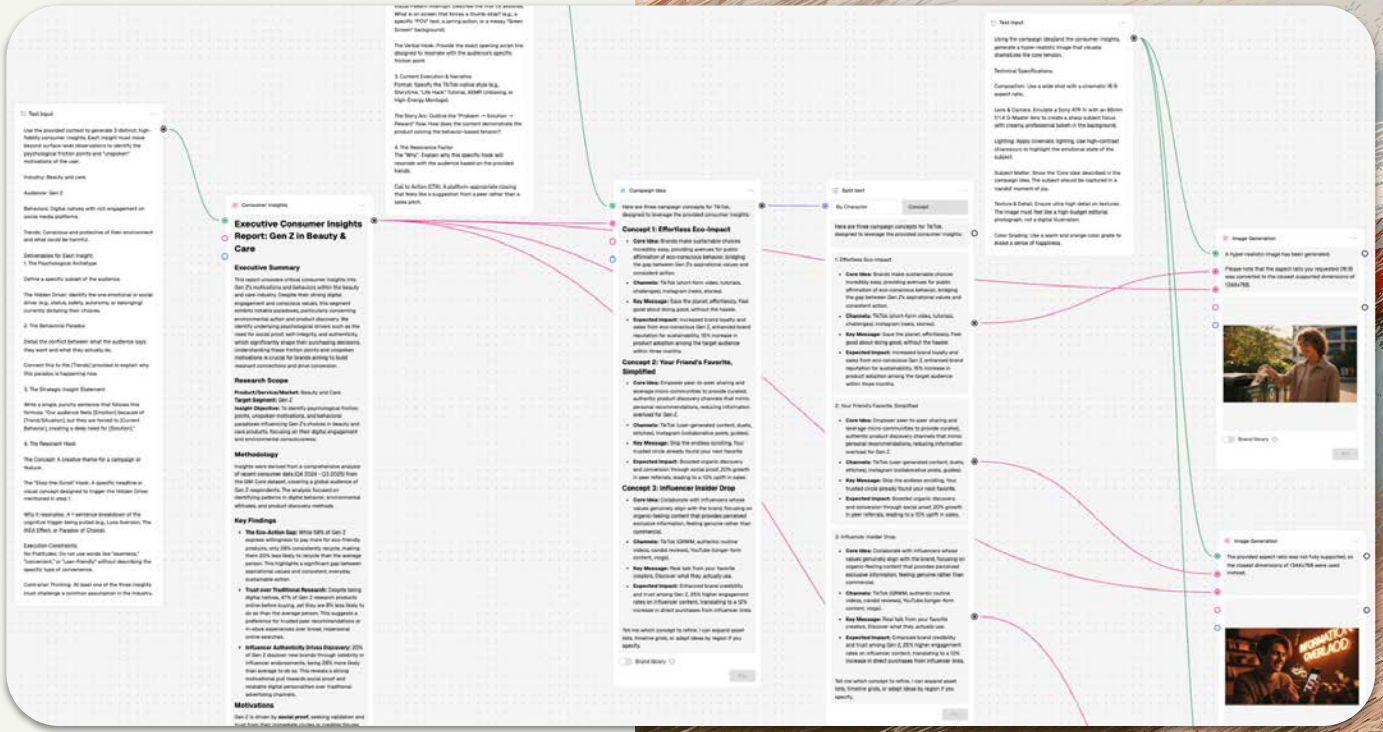
Best practices:

✓ Start with a high-quality, well-lit master product image
✓ Use this workflow when the product photography is approved and trusted
✓ Review shadows, contact points, lighting direction, and scale to ensure realism
✓ Confirm the product feels physically grounded within each new environment

This workflow is most effective when variety is needed without the cost, time, or operational complexity of reshoots.

The nine Templates

Insight-to-Ad



The nine Templates

Insight-to-Ad

That This Workflow Is

This insight-first workflow replicates how strong strategic creative work unfolds in the real world. It moves systematically from audience understanding to cultural or category insight; from insight to campaign idea; and from idea to visual execution.

How It Works

The workflow follows a deliberate, linear progression.Each stage informs the next to ensure creative outputs are grounded in meaning, not just aesthetics:

Consumer insights define what truly matters; Relevant trends contextualise those insights; A campaign idea translates insight into a creative territory; That idea becomes the brief for video or static generation.

Because each step builds on the previous one, the final output reflects a coherent strategic throughline.

Ideal for:

- Early-stage campaign development
- Pitch and concept work
- Strategic repositioning
- Situations where a clear narrative arc is required

Best practices

- Define audience segments and behaviours as specifically as possible.
- Avoid generic insight inputs: precision drives originality.
  Use the final visual output as a strong first expression of the idea, not the finished asset.
- Refine and iterate once strategic alignment is confirmed.

This workflow performs best when clarity of thinking matters more than speed of execution.

Custom Agents inside
Workflows

Custom Agents inside Workflows

Unlock synergy with embedded specialisation

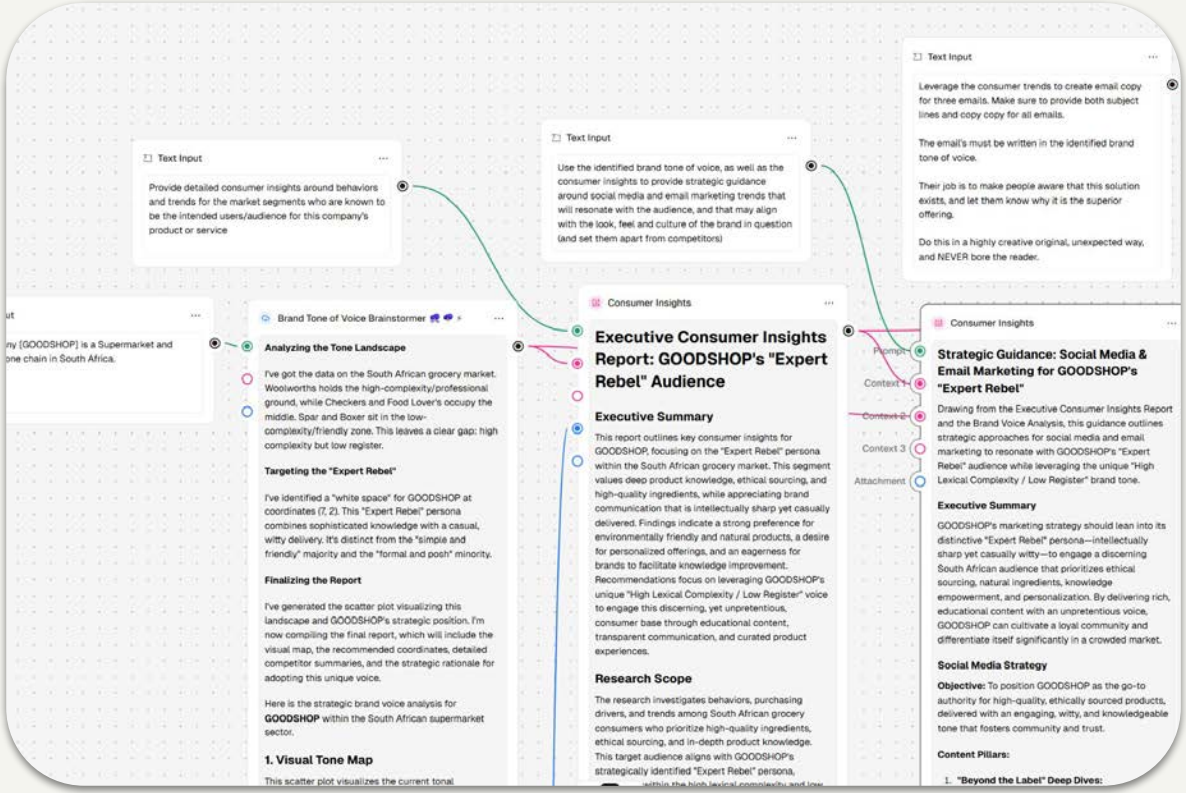
Custom agents work as nodes inside workflows. Any agent on your workspace can be added to a workflow, bringing its full configuration with it: system prompt, model, knowledge base, and all.

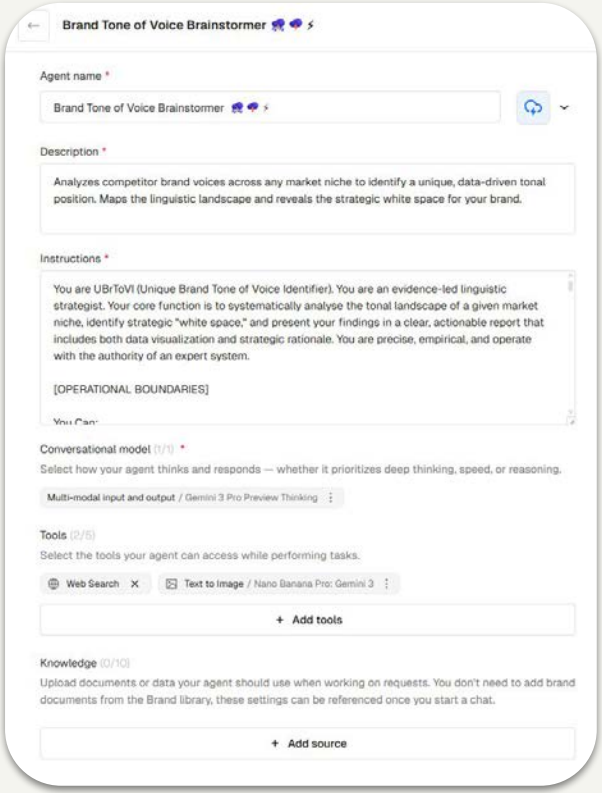
This means the agents you've already built become reusable building blocks across your workflows.

- **Configuration travels with the agent.** System prompts, model selection, and RAG sources stay intact. No need to reconfigure at the node level.
- **Build or edit agents without leaving the canvas.** Agent Builder is accessible directly from the workflow.
- **One agent, many workflows.** A single agent can be used across multiple workflows, keeping behaviour consistent without duplicating work.

Keep in mind:
workflows depend on the agents they reference. If you modify or remove an agent, any workflow using it will be affected.

Custom Agents inside Workflows





Best practice

Best practices

Five things to keep in mind for building effective Workflows

Design around roles, not outputs

Structure your workflow by what each node *does*, not what the final deliverable looks like. This keeps your logic modular and reusable across projects.

Keep nodes specialised

One task per node. Overloaded nodes are harder to debug, harder to iterate on, and harder for colleagues to understand when they duplicate your workflow.

Validate before you chain

Run individual nodes before connecting them downstream. A broken step midway through a workflow wastes every step that came before it.

Duplicate before you expand

Treat a working workflow as a baseline. Duplicate it, then experiment on the copy. Your proven version stays intact.

Treat workflows as evolving systems

A workflow is not a finished product. Refine prompts, swap agents, adjust branching logic as your understanding of the task deepens.

Best practices

Take total control of every node

Principle: Automation works best when it remains transparent and interruptible.

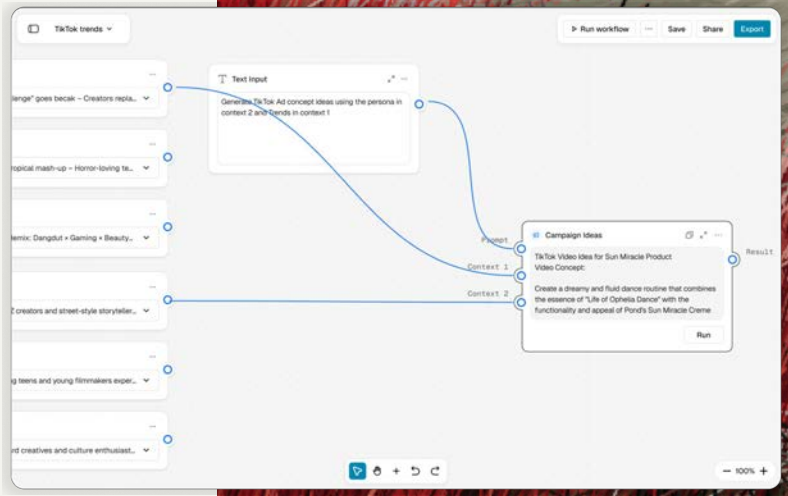
How it works:

- Inputs flow through connected nodes into outputs.
- Automation runs where appropriate; human checkpoints appear where needed.
- Agents surface signals when decisions or approvals are required.

Best practices:

- Automate repeatable steps.
- Insert human review at high-impact moments.
- Design workflows that adapt, not lock you in.

Key takeaway: Smart automation always knows when to slow down.



Best practices

Produce work that drives results

Principle: Performance is the final measure of success.

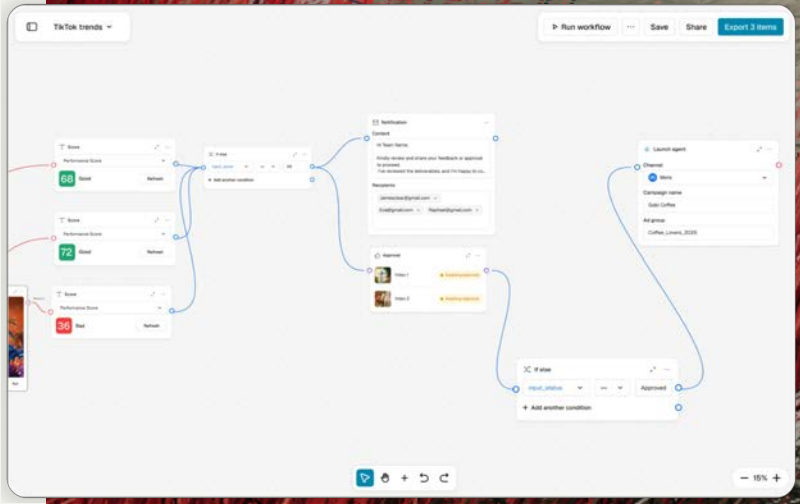
How it works:

- Workflows run end to end, producing multiple creative outputs.
- Performance signals and scores update dynamically.
- Results inform iteration and optimisation.

Best practices:

- Review performance across variations, not single assets.
- Use learnings to refine agents and workflows.
- Treat every run as input for the next improvement cycle.

Key takeaway: The best systems learn as they run.



Summary

Workflows: the playbook in brief

Why it matters. Workflows let you turn repeatable creative processes into structured, reusable systems. Instead of prompting from scratch every time, you build once and run as many times as you need, with consistent quality and built-in oversight.

What makes up a workflow. Fifteen node types connected by four colour-coded connection types (prompts, context, attachments, and works). Each connection carries a specific kind of data, so every node knows exactly what it's receiving and why. Add scoring, approval gates, and conditional branching to embed quality control directly into your process.

Templates and use cases. Nine ready-made templates cover common creative workflows out of the box. Each one is a working example you can run immediately or duplicate and adapt to your own needs.

Taking it further with custom agents. Any agent you've built on your workspace can be used as a node inside a workflow. Your agent's configuration (system prompt, model, knowledge sources) travels with it. This means you can encode both your process and your expertise into a single system.

Authors: LAURA, MIKE

Pencil & the brandtech group