



# The marketer's guide to Content Orchestration

- customer
- trend
- marketing

← Boss

interview research

brainstorm observation

group

product

new trendy

team A

product A

main product

team B

team C

product

new higher

research

wood  
wing

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# Introduction

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Companies that have content at the heart of their business model - publishers of magazines, newspapers, and books - have worked with WoodWing for almost two decades to manage, create, and publish content across online, in-app, and print.

Recently, we have observed a rapid change in the approach to content by companies across a wide range of industries, as brands look to differentiate their products and services in an increasingly competitive marketplace, and utilize new and expanded marketing channels to reach customers and partners. Some brands - such as Red Bull - have made a bold move to brand publishing. But even for many brands that are not overtly monetizing content, a shift has taken place. As new channels emerge and content becomes a way for brands to differentiate, brands' content production needs have crossed an invisible line. In this new paradigm, brands often encounter similar content challenges - both technical and workflow-based - as traditional publishers.

In this guide, we will explore what happens when brands begin to behave more like traditional publishers, with a particular focus on marketers in two types of retail brands:

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- Established brands that have evolved into omnichannel retailers.
  - Newer Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) pure plays, such as The Dollar Shave Club, Bonobos or Casper, which often start out as digital only, but are increasing shifting into the physical world.





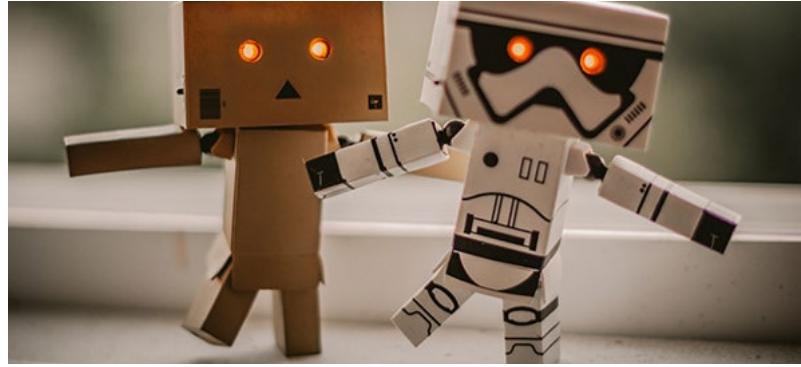
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# Content challenges facing brand storytellers

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In the first section of this guide, we will take a look at some of these challenges and how they are affecting content production in brands' marketing teams today.

# Technology Challenges



## The tooling ecosystem is expanding

In 2011, Chiefmartec published its inaugural Marketing Technology Landscape supergraphic, with 150 software solutions. In the 2019 edition there were more than 7,000. Marketing (and sales) teams typically work with a large, and growing number of software tools for product information and customer relationship, content, and digital asset management, enterprise resource planning, social media publishing, analytics, and more. Typically the number of these solutions within an organization grows incrementally, and often without structured planning.

## Channels are fragmenting

A channel could be a new format or language in print, or a new language on your website, a new app or social media platform. Expanding to new markets often automatically opens up new channels.

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**New channels emerge frequently. However, old channels rarely disappear.**

Each requires new tools to add to your existing systems, further exacerbating the first core problem. This can lead to “tool creep” where marketing teams have a large and growing number of disconnected tools that solve small parts of your problem, rather than a system made up of tools that automate processes or exchange data with one another.

## AI is siloed

Many organizations use AI tools for image recognition and to attach metadata to content and/or assets. However, these tools are often integrated into a CMS or elsewhere, and effectively locked in a silo where it can not be leveraged across different channels. While AI tools are becoming widely adopted by marketing teams, there is a lack of vision around how they fit into larger systems, and how they enrich content throughout the content value chain.



# Human Challenges



## Workflow management is broken

Many marketing teams have some degree of defined workflows to manage content production. But often this still requires manual steps such as emailing when a new draft is ready, or collaborating on Google Docs. This raises a host of problems - multiple stakeholders simultaneously editing documents without a clear owner or approval process, separate email or message threads discussing the same content, and so on.

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**“Content and the other assets need to work across channels and across customer journeys. If a buyer is only asking themselves, ‘Can our Web CMS support this current web redesign?’ they’re doing it wrong. They need to ask more questions around how this process can evolve. How the technology can support new angles around content reuse. And how can they operate faster?”**

Mark Grannan, Forrester

## Existing assets, content, and data sources are under-leveraged

Writers, designers, and other content creators often make content from scratch, over and over, without utilizing content or data available to them. They fail to leverage data sources (such as PIM, CRM, or ERP), or reuse copy, images, or other assets (from a DAM or file sharing solution) - either because they are unaware they exist or don’t know where to find them. A related issue is version control - without proper management and tools, the chance of an outdated logo or unapproved image being used increases significantly.

## Creators produce content the way that works for them

Humans are biologically hard-wired to take the path of least resistance. In terms of content production tools, that means no matter how functional or elegant a solution may appear, if it is not intuitive and solving a genuine pain point, your content creator will likely use Google Docs or Word and email to get their work done.



# Sample (broken) Workflow



A sample overview of a content production flow for web and print in an in-house marketing team in a mid-size company is below, complete with common examples of where steps can break down.



Marketing director

## 1. Create brief

This is often created with input from a subject matter expert (such as a product manager). It may be sent by email, Google Docs, or even verbally. To track status, it may be added to a project planning tool.

*Risk: If there is no formalized way to create a brief, or no dedicated tool or place to store briefs, they may be written inconsistently, leading to confusion further on in the process.*



Content marketer

## 2. First draft

The content marketer may need to interview the subject matter expert and conduct extra research to come up with a first draft.

*Risk: Elements of this story product descriptions, information, and so on, may exist in other places. But if the content marketer is not aware of them, they will spend valuable time recreating this from scratch.*



Marketing director  
& Content  
marketer

## 3. Review and edits

The marketing director or person who created the brief, plus the subject matter expert, will normally give their feedback on the article.

*Risk: Extra people stepping into the process, lack of defined steps, and multiple stakeholders working on the copy at a given time, can all cause confusion and lengthen the approval process.*





Graphic designer &  
Content marketer

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#### 4. Design for online (and print)

Next the content marketer emails or talks to the designer to create design for online and/or print. The designer works on something in Photoshop, and shares with a file-sharing solution.

*Risk: Often the designer will treat this project as an individual task. But there may be digital assets or design elements that can be repurposed from previous projects.*



Content marketer  
& Social media  
manager

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#### 5. Publish (online and print)

The content marketer puts the copy and design elements in the CMS, and hits publish, and the social media manager shares this in Hootsuite or another social media management tool.

In these steps, multiple, mostly unconnected tools are used - project planning, email, Google Docs or Word, Adobe CC tools, a file-sharing service, CMS, social media service, a PDF conversion tool, and afterwards analytics services such as Google Analytics and HotJar. This results in multiple potential points of failure, a lack of automation, and a high degree of repetitive work.





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# Content production meets the law of accelerating returns

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The Law of Accelerating Returns is a concept that new technology leads to newer technology in a building-block fashion, enabling a steepening trajectory of digital transformation over time.

In content production, we can see this play out in terms of the proliferation of channels and the proliferation of tools. Along with this comes skills, culture, and organizational challenges. The pace of change means that marketing organizations need to innovate on the fly - maintaining (or increasing) content output while adding new channels, adopting new tools, and upskilling staff.

At a certain point, content production becomes so involved that it begins to resemble the challenges faced by publishers. This presents a timely opportunity to share learnings on how to adopt a content-first approach in content production. Here two scenarios emerge, which we call Content Spaghetti and Content Orchestration.

# The threat: Content Spaghetti



We chose the term Content Spaghetti because these types of content workflow have a number of loose ends, lack of structure and visibility, and an elevated risk of assets or approval flows getting lost in the mess. If you are an established omnichannel brand, that puts you at risk of losing mindshare to nimbler D2C competitors. If you are a challenger or startup brand, it means you will needlessly burn through valuable capital. For both types of business, this setup leads to lost time, inefficiencies, cost blowouts, and potential inconsistency in content production.

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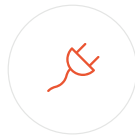
## Common symptoms of Content Spaghetti include:



Email ping pong caused by undefined workflows.



Lost assets - images, logos, PS files, documents, and so on.



Tools that are not connected.



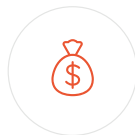
Tools that are improperly or rarely used.



Assets that are used only once.



Little oversight of your content management, creation, and publishing tools.



Buying the same - or similar - stock photos more than once.



Out-of-date/unapproved logos or images going live.



# The opportunity: Content Orchestration



In IT, orchestration is “the automated configuration, coordination, and management of computer systems and software.” We have adapted this term to brand storytelling to describe a state in which tools are seamlessly integrated, and working with one another, combined with strong workflow management, training, and organization.



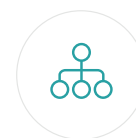
Workflow

+



Training

+



Organization

With Content Orchestration, brands have the ability to streamline the management, production, and publishing of content. This means improved efficiency, clear workflows, the ability to manage, share, reuse, and safeguard assets, and create and publish content across channels in a timely manner.

# What does Content Orchestration mean for brands?

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Customers buy into your stories. Not only your products.

When people read a story, we feel an experience and synchronize our minds with the subject. For brands, this is a powerful lever to build an emotional connection with your target customer. People are hardwired to seek out and present themselves to others through the choices they make, whether that is media they consume, music they listen to, and people they associate with - and brands are no exception.

The biggest brands in the world are valued in the hundreds of billions of dollars, partly as a result of their ability to create stories that resonate with their customers. But beyond creating these stories are a host of practical questions:

- [How to create consistent workflows?](#)
- [How to build a connected system?](#)
- [How to publish across channels?](#)
- [How to improve personalization and differentiation into your brands storytelling?](#)

And many more.

It isn't just WoodWing asking these questions. Although brands value storytelling, they feel they could be doing a better job. According to research by Digiday, in collaboration with WoodWing, over 80% of marketers feel their brand storytelling could improve, and more than half of marketers say improving workflows and better content and asset management tools would help.

Whether you are omnichannel or D2C, Content Orchestration enables you to take a content-first approach to storytelling, providing a strong basis to make content a competitive differentiator.

In part three, we will look at best practices and technical solutions around these questions.





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## Content Orchestration: The holy grail

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In the first part of this section we will look at some practical steps to bringing Content Orchestration into your organization.

# 5 steps to orchestrating your workflows and processes



1. Make an inventory of your tools, workflows, and channels
2. Create a vision of where you want to be
3. Partner with a champion in your IT team
4. Test small-scale ways to improve
5. Roll out successes to wider group, and repeat

## 1. Make an inventory of your tools, workflows, and channels

If your workflows and tooling have evolved without much oversight, this can be a challenging task. Often, for different content types or different teams, you will have different stakeholders, tools, and channels.

If you are operating on the Content Spaghetti end of the scale, many of these processes and tools may not be documented - meaning you will need to talk to stakeholders along the content production chain.

Also, be sure to identify where steps are automated (if any) and where they are manual. This will provide some extra possibilities of where to automate repetitive steps. Depending on the size of your organization, it may be worth working with an external partner to interview stakeholders and uncover insights into content production challenges.

## 2. Create a vision of where you want to be

This starts with cataloging the problems you identified in step one. Common examples include the Content Spaghetti challenges in the first section. Based on these, outline your vision of how your content should be produced, managed, and published, in a perfect world.

The exact format of the vision will depend on your situation. But some things to consider include:

- It should be created in collaboration with internal stakeholders, and have buy-in from senior or C-level marketing and/or technical stakeholders.
- It should have outcomes and/or metrics attached, such as "have clear approval processes," "turn around content within X days," "reduce new content creation by X% through reusing existing content."
- It should have a broad timeline attached to help keep things in motion.

Last but not least, it should inspire people and be a commonly agreed as a beneficial goal to work towards. This will help create momentum for the project through positive word of mouth.

### **3. Partner with a champion in your IT team**

Having a technical collaborator is critical to building a comprehensive approach to Content Orchestration. However, marketing and IT people often have different ideas about how to approach it. As a very general rule of thumb, it is important to remember two things:

- Marketers tend to look at the value of tools individually, and how they can be used to solve a particular problem in content production.
- IT will be more interested in issues around how tools can connect with one another to build a Content Orchestration system.

In addition, marketers tend to be attracted to qualities such as tools that offer good UX for people in the content production flow, while IT may be more concerned about security and whether hosting is in the cloud or on-premise.

To really ensure a productive collaboration, both of these viewpoints are important. Left unchecked, IT may build a system in which all the tools can exchange data and automate tasks, but which no one uses. Likewise, marketing may simply buy the best individual tool for their needs in each step of the process, none of which can work with one another or help automate repetitive tasks.

#### 4. Test small-scale ways to improve

You may consider working with one team or unit to test out new tools, gather feedback, and identify best practices before rolling out to the wider organization. This will give you the opportunity to iron out kinks before large scale deployment. But there is another advantage. Your users will generate word of mouth buzz internally that will inspire enthusiasm and buy-in prior to rollout.

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##### Example: Cipla

Cipla is a global pharmaceutical company. Its previous workflow consisted of emailing files, annotating, and sending a copy, leading to slow production times and lost assets. The organization needed a way to cut down on its production time, while ensuring that sensitive content was always accurate. In its first iteration it implemented WoodWing's DAM solution in a single market and team. The solution's automated version tracking and workflow management helped it cut down on production time from weeks to days and the results sparked enthusiasm across the wider organization.

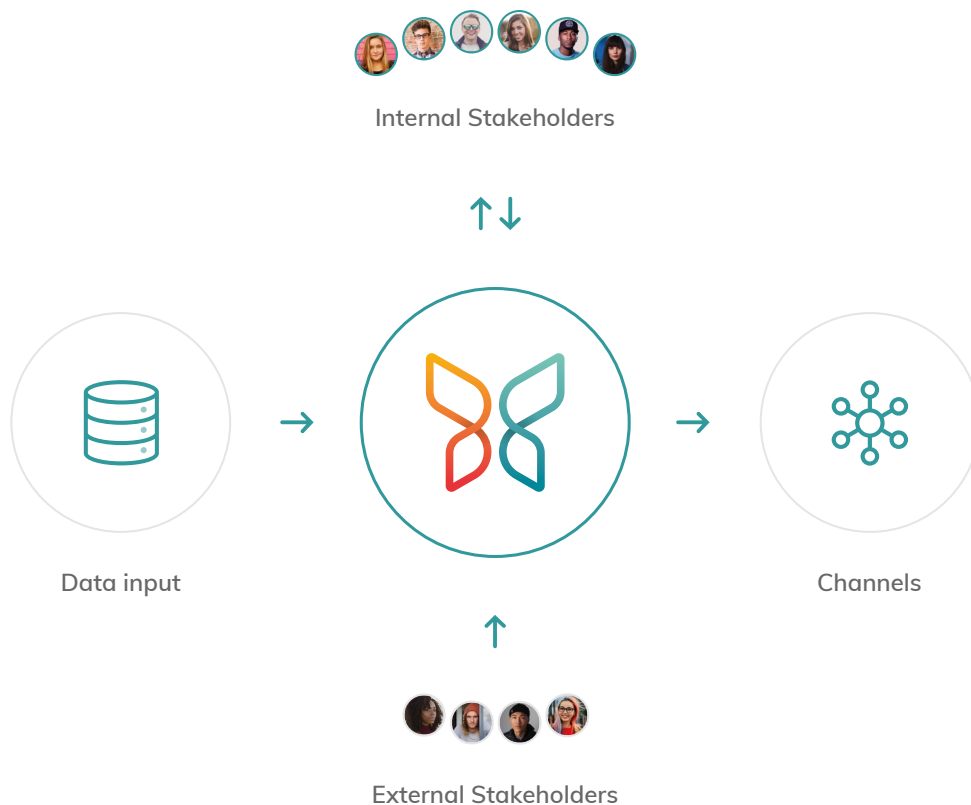
#### 5. Roll out successes to wider group, and repeat

You're on your way! As your first iterations roll out, it's important to continue to gather feedback from users, optimize workflows, and look for areas to improve.



# Content Orchestration with WoodWing

WoodWing sits at the heart of your Content Orchestration efforts, connecting with all the key solutions you already use, including Adobe Creative Cloud, PIM systems, and so on. Through it, you can set your business rules, manage workflows, and publish to any channel. The diagram below shows how it fits in with data inputs, workflow, and publishing channels.



## How WoodWing can automate and improve the sample workflow

In the first section of this guide, we showed a sample workflow in a mid-sized marketing team. Here we show how that might look using WoodWing solutions to enable Content Orchestration.

*Important: This is simply one sample workflow and setup out of the limitless number of possibilities available. But no matter what tools you use or how your workflow looks, WoodWing will be able to help manage, create, and publish content, automating, standardizing, and streamlining difficult steps along the way.*



Marketing director

### 1. Create brief

This can be created in a pre-defined Google Form, and WoodWing picks up the form, generates an assignment in WoodWing, and triggers an email to the content creator to begin a workflow.

*Advantage: Standardizing and semi-automating to improve clarity and save time.*



Content marketer

### 2. First draft

The content marketer can search WoodWing's DAM module for related content, making use of manually-created or AI metadata tags to find relevant information. Then they can add their v1 content directly into WoodWing, in a template that fits the content and channel(s) where it will eventually be published. When the content marketer is done, they change the status to trigger an email notification to the Marketing Director to review.

*Advantage: Leveraging existing content gives the content creator a head start on efficiency. And using pre-defined templates in WoodWing give the content creator an idea of how the story will look, as well as reduce the need to copy, paste, and format later on.*



Content marketer

### 3. Review and edits

While the director reviews and makes suggestion to the content, it is locked to other users. When he or she is done, an email is triggered back to the content creator to incorporate the suggestions, or mark it ready to publish.

*Advantage: Having one person working on content at a time makes the creation process clearer and more efficient.*





Graphic designer &  
Content marketer

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#### 4. Design for online (and print)

Next the content marketer emails or talks to the designer to create design for online and/or print. Depending on the workflow and brief in place, the designer may be automatically alerted once the status changes. The designer can first check for related existing images by searching in the WoodWing DAM, and then work in Photoshop and automatically import finished assets to the DAM, where they are stored for future use.

*Advantage: The design part of the process is a step in the existing workflow, and asset reuse make the design process faster, while ensuring new assets will be available for reuse at a later date.*



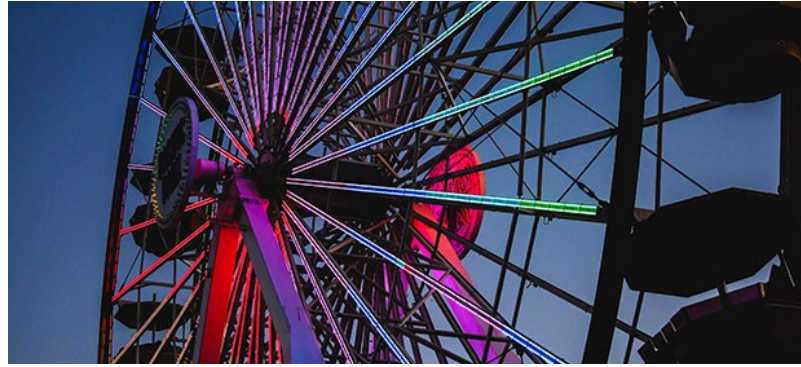
Content marketer  
& Social media  
manager

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#### 5. Publish (online and print)

Since the story is already in WoodWing and formatted for different channels, publishing to the website and app is fast and simple, involving the click of a button.

# Features of WoodWing solutions



WoodWing is made up of two key integrated solutions, a DAM solution, and a creation, workflow, and publishing solution. This gives creators the ability to take a content-first approach, and focus on the story rather than the channel.

## The DAM Solution

WoodWing's DAM module is built for organizations with large numbers of assets and complex content workflows. In terms of Content Orchestration, key points of interest include:

- It has an intuitive UI.
- It can scale indefinitely.
- It includes AI tools to enrich your assets and content at the beginning of the content value chain, so AI can be fully leveraged for assets across all channels.
- It has REST and Webhooks APIs to enable integration with almost any tools you currently use, including a particularly strong integration with Adobe Creative Cloud.

You can find out more about our [DAM solution here](#).

## The workflow, creation and publishing solution

The creation and publishing solution enables users to carry out three key activities:

- Create channel-agnostic content.
- Automate workflows management and approval process.
- Publish to any channel - meaning (multiple) print versions, web, and in-app.





This solution also has robust integrations with Adobe Creative Cloud and other tools. It comes with a publication overview and the ability to enable remote contributors. You can [find out more here](#).

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#### Business partners

Our customers tend to have complex and unique needs around content. We work with 60+ integration partners around the world, to help with advice, analysis, implementation, integration, training, and support. Our partners are experts in content first workflows. You can see a complete list of our [business partners here](#).

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#### Technology partners

Content Orchestration is not a “go-at-it-alone” philosophy. Integrated with WoodWing, some technologies are a no-brainer, adding compound value greater than the sum of our parts. We work with a number of technology partners to ensure our customers can leverage best-in-breed solutions out of the box. See our [technology partners](#).

# Conclusion

In organizations with complex content requirements, Content Orchestration can be considered as two things:

1. A constantly-evolving journey rather than a static end state.
2. A unique setup that enables a content-first approach, that takes into account all the specific requirements of your own organization.

Because no two organizations are the same, there are limitless ways to approach Content Orchestration. It can also be helpful to seek external input from organizations that regularly work with publishers and brands to implement these projects - such as WoodWing and its partners.

## About WoodWing

WoodWing Software helps brands, publishers, and agencies create, manage, and publish content across teams and publish across channels. We build solutions that are perfect for large teams to efficiently work together on creative processes, within systems that are easy to manage. Customers include Hearst, Forbes, Axel Springer, Coca Cola, and Yamaha. To find out more, visit [woodwing.com](http://woodwing.com), or [contact us](#).



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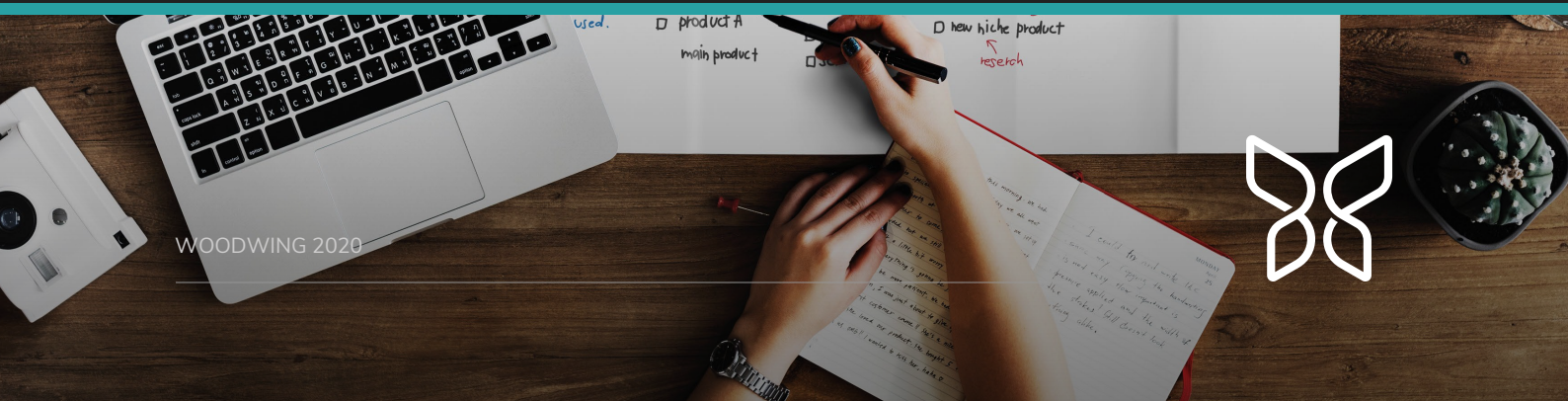
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