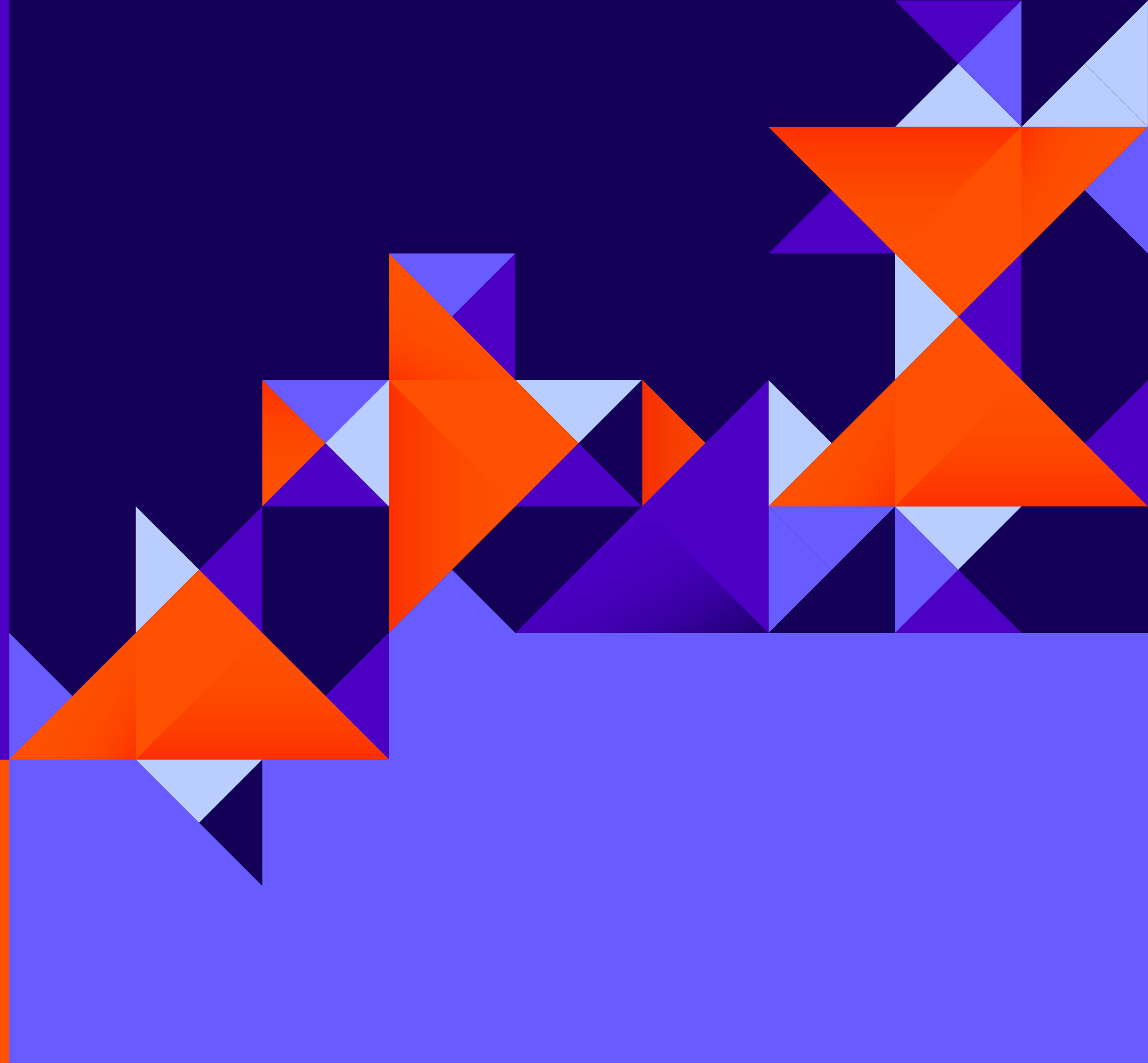


**4** PACK








# End-to-end product management

How Food & Beverage organisations  
can smash their siloes and turn  
product launches into agile, smart,  
safe, and cost-efficient operations



# Your product launch team is terrific. But is their hard work just covering up a disjointed process?

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# Your product launch team is terrific. But is their hard work just covering up a disjointed process?

Success in the Food & Beverage industry happens when you orchestrate a few crucial factors: you're responsive to the market, you manage to innovate continuously (and in line with customer needs), and, crucially, you get your products to market cost-effectively, on time, and in line with compliance regulation.



These things require expertise, and the power to act quickly. Now you may think your business has got this covered. If so, then we're 99% certain this ebook is for you.

**In many organisations, a bunch of terrific people are working extra hard to cover up what is essentially a disjointed process.**

It's true. If you're anything like most Food & Beverage manufacturers, then what's keeping you in business, in fact, is a world-class team that's got your back. When you take a closer look at the conditions under which they're working, however, it's almost a miracle anything goes to market at all. A few cases in point:

**Your team is under extreme pressure.**

Margins are small. Timelines are tight. Both require next-level negotiation and co-ordination efforts.

**The process is opaque.**

NPD, production, packaging, and compliance processes are highly interdependent. None can happen without the others. Yet it's close to impossible for any one stakeholder to gain immediate visibility of where a project's at - at any point in time.

**It's inefficient.**

Individual departments may have dedicated digital systems (PLM, PIM, etc.) but they remain unconnected – meaning lots of manual copying and pasting, and emailing of information. A version nightmare with tons of potential for mistakes and inconsistencies.

**It's agile to the max** – with product information or other elements liable to change up until the last minute (but again, no way to quickly ascertain the latest status quo).

**The risk of human error is huge.**

A mistake could seriously endanger consumers and/or cause enormous recall costs or fines. Your people know this and work extra hard to keep your customers and business safe.

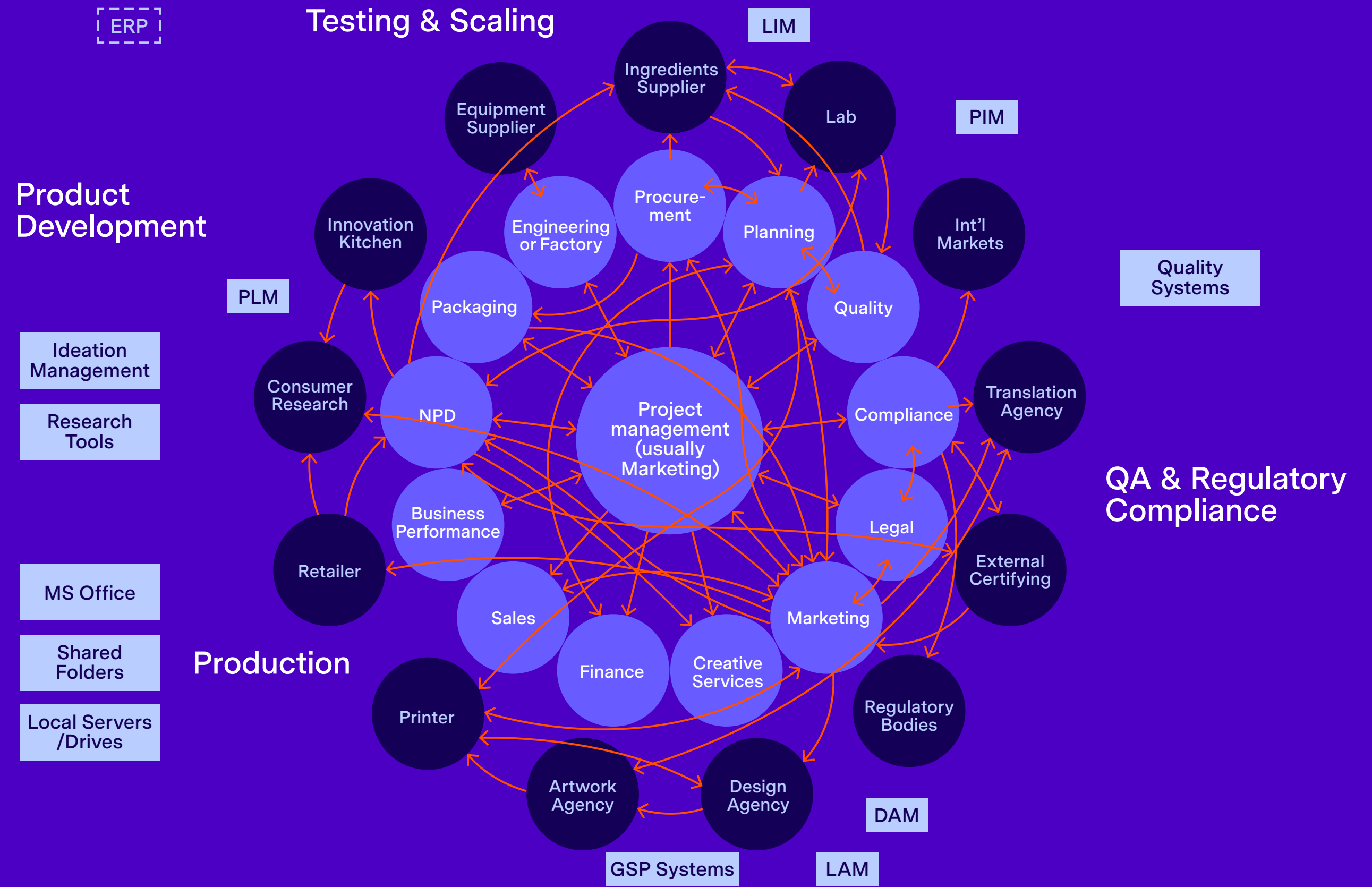
**It is, in fact, rocket science.**

Everybody involved is doing highly specialised work: understanding a fast-changing market; developing that product so it's a customer success and can be produced at scale; managing ingredients and their costs, so your business makes a profit; coordinating the supply chain and the production process; knowing how to design a label that's both compliant and appealing to consumers (and don't forget the retailer); getting the printer to slot your labels in last-minute while co-ordinating final artwork sign-off; hitting retailer deadlines and production runs...

Your people know how to do all that, and more. Holy smoke. They shouldn't have to spend their time chasing updated pack copy, should they?



This simplified model of a “product-to-shelf” process in the Food & Beverage industry shows just a few of the workflows, departments and dependencies you’ll need to orchestrate to develop or update a product and get it to the retailer. If that already makes you want to run for the hills, we recommend that you don’t even think about the usual iterations and numerous product variants that we haven’t included here.



## **A burnt-out team should not be the price of doing business**

All of this is to say: if you're running a successful Food & Beverage business, you've got your team to thank for that. It's only due to their tireless work managing this complexity, connecting the dots, doing overtime, calling in favours, re-keying information, proofreading conscientiously, and generally making things happen within the most impossible timeframes that your business manages to repeatedly hit the shelves with new or updated products – instead of facing contractual penalties, or one compliance scandal after the other.

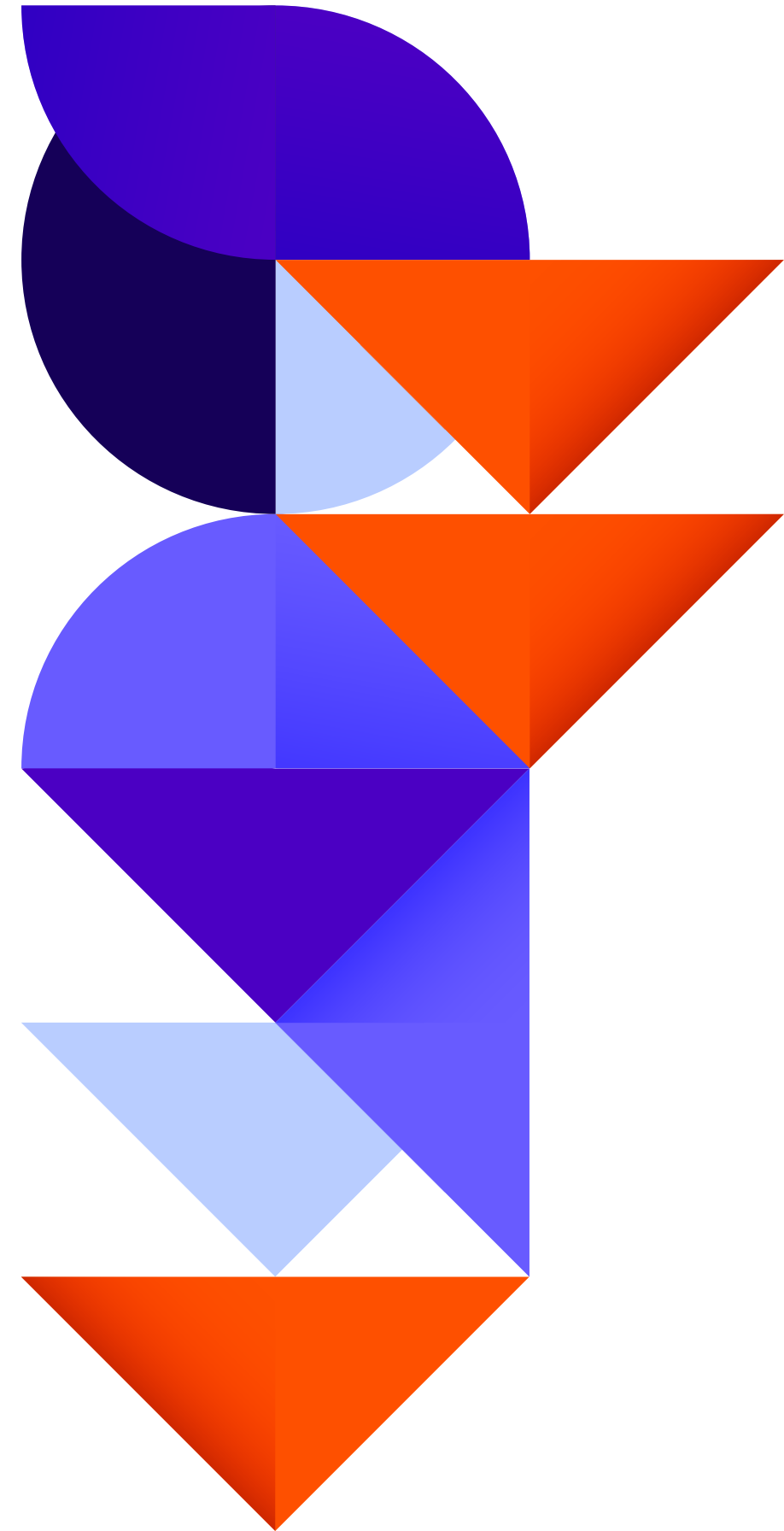
But let's face it: that's no way to work.

This ebook is a nod to the above-and-beyond efforts of these employees. It's also a reminder that an adherence to good compliance and accuracy, married with effective digital tools can allow your teams to do their jobs more efficiently.

You'll see: it's not just 'the nice thing to do' – it's absolutely worth it for your business, too. It'll stop your launches and updates resembling emergency caesareans, and help you turn successful innovation into a repeatable, scalable, and cost-efficient process that doesn't burn through teams.

We can show you how. We've helped dozens of Food & Beverage businesses get there by connecting the functional silos involved in a product launch or update. (It's less scary and more affordable than you might think.) And we've put the best things we've learned into this ebook.

Sound good? Let's dive in.



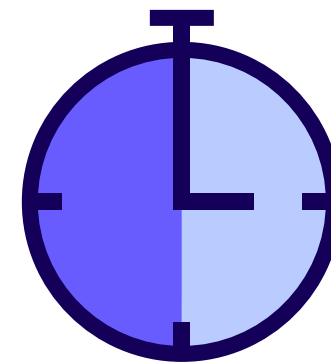
# Let's talk numbers. The true cost of a fragmented product dev-to-shelf process





# Let's talk numbers. The true cost of a fragmented product dev-to-shelf process

We get it: no business goes and optimises a process just for kicks. But any successful company understands that it needs to keep three core elements under control: cost, time, and risk. And the ugly truth is that the way most Food & Beverage companies currently handle product launches and updates (i.e. with spreadsheets, disconnected departmental systems, and up against it) puts all three of these in jeopardy. Let's take a closer look:



## **Information siloes cause delays and errors**

Here's a common scenario: say your product specs change because costing concluded that you had to switch suppliers. That has an impact on nutritional testing. The lab gets cracking, but somehow, nobody tells Marketing about the change. (This can happen, especially when you track progress offline, in a spreadsheet.) So these guys are going ahead, using completely outdated information to brief in design and artwork for three types of packaging, which they'll end up having to pay for, but can't use. (They'll also have to work nights to fix it in time for rollout and possibly pay a rush fee for new artwork.) And that's the best case scenario. In the worst case, they'll print it, ship it and use it to label your batch, causing a massive compliance nightmare and forcing you to recall the product. Yikes.



## **Businesses work around the problem – but don’t fundamentally solve it**

Most Food & Beverage companies handle the problem by throwing bodies and resources at it – from internal or external teams. It’s usually the project managers or marketing co-ordinators who run the whole thing. They’ve often created their own best practice, try to hold on to all the strings, and achieve visibility of the entire project.

### **Low efficiency is a time and resource drain**

And even if they do get there in the end – the avoidable extra work has a huge impact on your business:

Because productivity suffers (it’s not unusual to see employees spending up to 30% of their time duplicating admin effort)

Because things take longer (potentially causing you to miss deadlines)

Because that makes you less profitable (some companies report that up to 45% of employee time goes into manual admin tasks – instead of value creation)

Because it frustrates employees no end (nobody enjoys putting in a meticulous late-night proof-reading session only to find out that a different version ended up going to print).

Unfortunately, it doesn’t stop there. Because even the best people can’t catch every mistake. And so, by using systems and processes that aren’t fit for purpose, Food & Beverage businesses risk the following, with every new project:

### **Contractual fines due to missed deadlines**

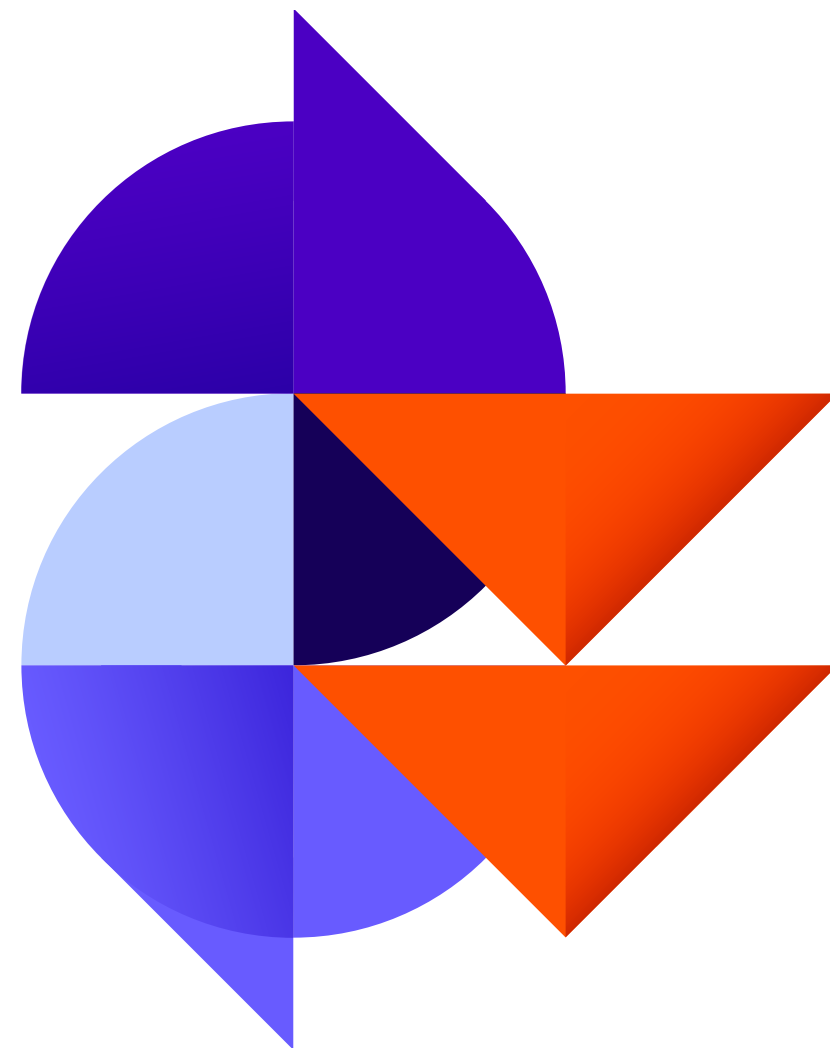
– depending on your agreements with your buyers.

**Product recalls.** Every week, several Food & Beverage products need recalling in the UK – caused either by errors in the production process, a quality issue, or mislabelling. And that can potentially be fatal to the manufacturer (see the boxout).

### **Profit killer**

When a faulty lid caused Britvic to recall some of its “Fruit Shoot” products in 2012, the total cost was estimated to be between £15m and £25m. The company’s shares dropped by 15%, and the recall was expected to shave between £1m and £5m off Britvic’s profit before tax. <sup>2</sup>

55% of people say they would switch brands following a product recall <sup>1</sup>



**Reputation damage.** According to research, 55% of people say they'd switch brands following a recall, even if only temporarily, and 15% say they'd never buy the recalled product again. 21% even stated they'd actively avoid the full product range, not just the recalled product itself. (And some of these people will voice their views on social media and amplify the damage!). <sup>1</sup>

### **That sounds grim. Where's the good news?**

It's this: all of the above is actually avoidable. There's a faster, cheaper, safer, and much more gratifying way of getting a product to market. It already exists, and it doesn't cost the earth. But it does involve a new way of doing things. We call it "end-to-end management" and it happens when you integrate all the parts that play together to orchestrate your product's journey, from idea to shelf:

- **Connecting everyone** (external suppliers, too!) who's part of your product development team, and making it possible for them to work from a single system, with a real-time, single version of the truth.

- **Digitising the end-to-end process** to get rid of manual data entry, avoidable human error and duplication, once and for all
- **Establishing workflows** (however complex and iterative) that take into account the up- and downstream effects of a change or approval; and automating them to ensure compliance, and boost speed. This also gets rid of process steps that are invisible to the rest of the team (such as approval emails or status reports hidden on somebody's desktop)
- **Standardising content output** by providing templates, formats, and rules that can be automatically applied to product information (across all your channels!)
- **Building agility into each step** – the frameworks, permissions, and tools that empower people to drive the project forward and get it right, every time (within their remit, of course)

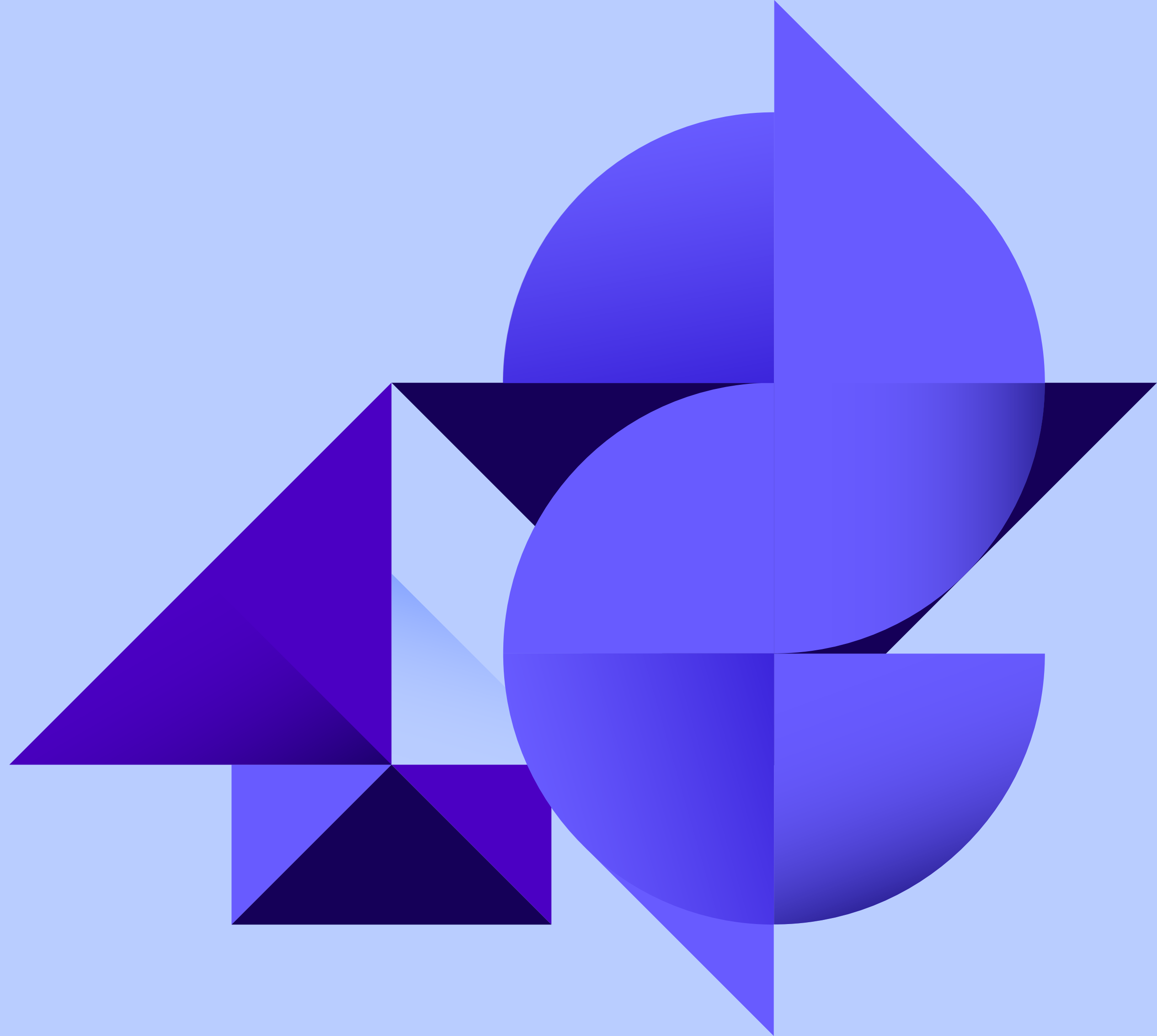
<sup>1</sup> <https://packagingeurope.com/total-recall-impact-product-recalls-food-industry/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.marketingweek.com/fruit-shoot-recall-to-cost-25m/>

## End-to-end product management

We've helped dozens of businesses get there – and it completely changed the way they think about the product development process today. We hope you will, too.

In the following chapters, we'll dive a little deeper into the roles of four key players in the process – NPD, Compliance, Packaging, and Marketing. We'll show you how the right end-to-end technology can establish new ways of working that make everyone's jobs infinitely easier – all while speeding up and de-risking innovation for your business. Too good to be true? See for yourself.

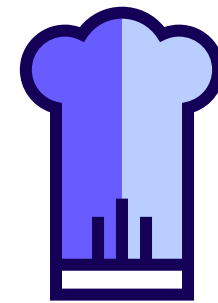


# Focus on NPD – how to set your product journey up for success



# Focus on NPD – how to set your product journey up for success

When you're first starting out creating a new product (or updating an existing one), you may think that compliance checks, artwork, barcodes and print specs are far off in the distant future. After all, it'll take tons of iterations until it's shelf-ready. It's quite the opposite, though. By setting up your innovation or update project well, right from the start, you'll be able to speed up the entire process, and achieve maximum efficiency further down the line. The magic keys: automatic documentation a single version of the truth.



**How an integrated tool can orchestrate your entire launch or update project:**

## **Turning the entire process digital**

Disconnected systems, individual spreadsheets, communication by email, and manual processes are the nemeses of an agile project. Why? Because they cause it to get stuck in various places. A central, online tool helps to unstuck the stuck. It gets rid of siloes, makes the entire process digital and puts it in a central place – from product information down to briefs, spec documents, workflows and approvals. This hugely reduces the risk of human error, and the time that goes into duplicate data entry. Plus, it makes changes traceable – trust us, it's a whole new experience.

### Bringing everyone onboard

Here's another thing of beauty: a central tool allows everyone to collaborate. All your departments and functions, and – crucially – external stakeholders, too: retailers, innovation kitchens, your finance department, the lot. No more emailing out of spreadsheets, receiving data in a wrong format, or introducing errors through re-keying. This boosts visibility, speeds things up – and makes everybody more accountable, too.

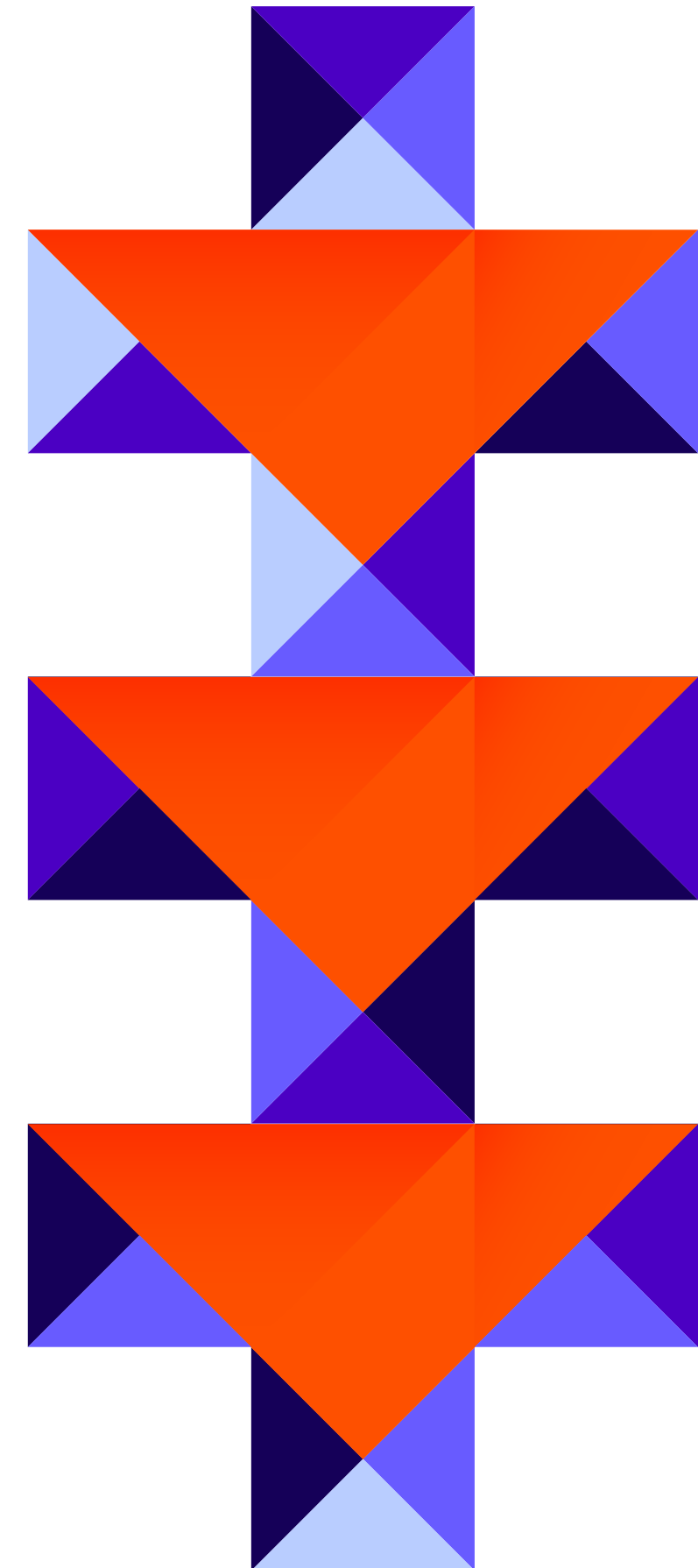
### Centralising all product and supplier information

NPD is where you first start creating product information. Of course, the specs may well change in the process – but if you set the framework for your product information up right from the beginning (your categories, required fields, suppliers, dependencies, etc.) – you'll always be able to work with a complete set of specs. When you're developing a number of product variants, you'll be able to easily cross-reference information between them. And, when it comes to updating a product update: you're already halfway there, with essential data already in the tool.

### Documenting the process and setting you up for best practice

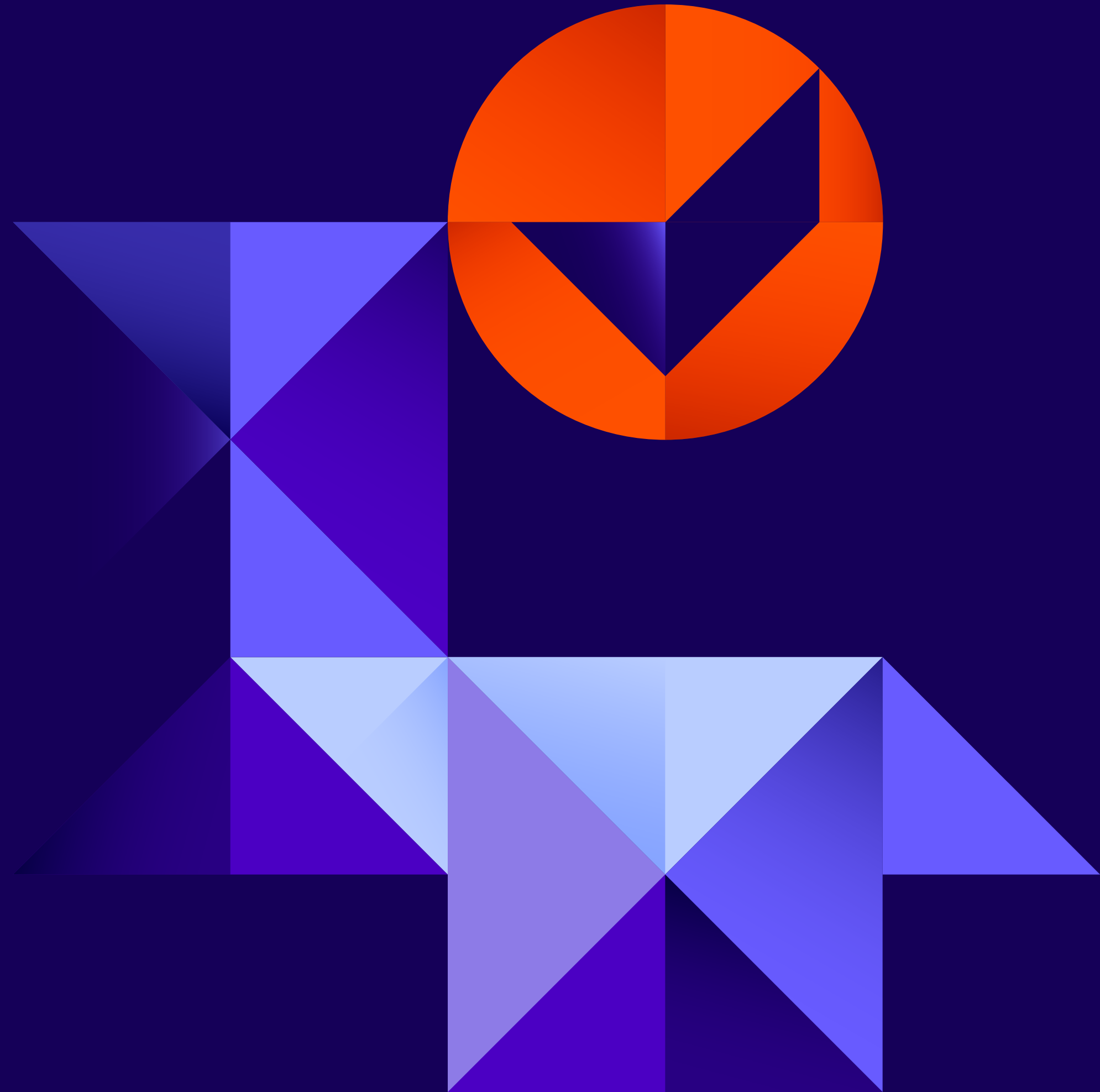
We've already talked about the waste that happens when highly qualified people spend a ton of their time doing duplicate admin tasks – but there's another, huge source of waste in most Food & Beverage organisations: the knowledge your business has already gained – which usually lives in some Sharepoint folder, and gets forgotten about when people change jobs. For instance: The consumer insight you've gathered; all those good ideas for new products that your team has come up with (but that got parked, or not pursued for another reason); what you've learned from moving a batch from test to production (e.g. that procuring mango in 5kg tins is not feasible – you need 50kg barrels).

Many businesses are still not doing the post-launch reviews that would turn these individual learnings into collective ones, and feed the next round of innovation. A central system that captures the development process as you go will help, by documenting each step, and making that information accessible to the entire business.





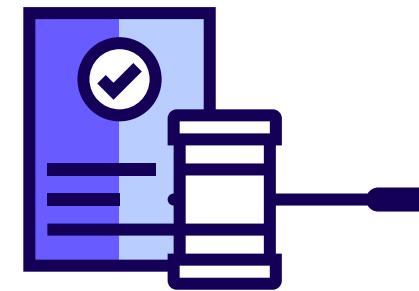
# A closer look at Compliance – how to minimise human error right at the source





## A closer look at Compliance – how to minimise human error right at the source

Being in charge of compliance can be a lonely job: while everyone else in your business is worried about cost and speed-to-market, compliance has to make sure that consumers stay safe and that production and labelling respects the law – which can take some time to get right. And, considering that regulation keeps getting stricter, and that international labelling rules aren't exactly a piece of cake to adhere to – the compliance department have got their work cut out for them.



**How a collaborative innovation tool drives compliance:**

### **Applies complex rules automatically**

A digital system can automate many things that would usually require rigorous enforcement and scrutiny from Compliance, such as printing allergens bold, or applying the correct labelling rules for Denmark. Set it up once, and rest assured that the same rules are applied across all products, at all times.

One regulatory compliance expert told us that 40% of the time of anyone working in compliance is taken up chasing other people for information.

### **Feeds product information straight into the artwork**

Once approved, the system will feed accurate product information straight into the artwork, without the need for anyone to touch it (and potentially introduce errors). Even better, it will automatically generate the correct nutritional facts tables for each product, making it a lot easier to manage and track regulatory compliance across markets. A good tool should include translation memory – to save costs and ensure consistency for international markets.

### **Standardises the necessary workflows**

Getting a product ready for sale is an iterative process. And because things can change up until the last minute, it's really important that you can customise your workflows. This ensures that the right people get to see and approve (or not) any piece before it's released to the next step: Marketing, Legal, etc. Your platform should also automate these workflows to ensure that they're adhered to for every project, and that nothing falls through the cracks.

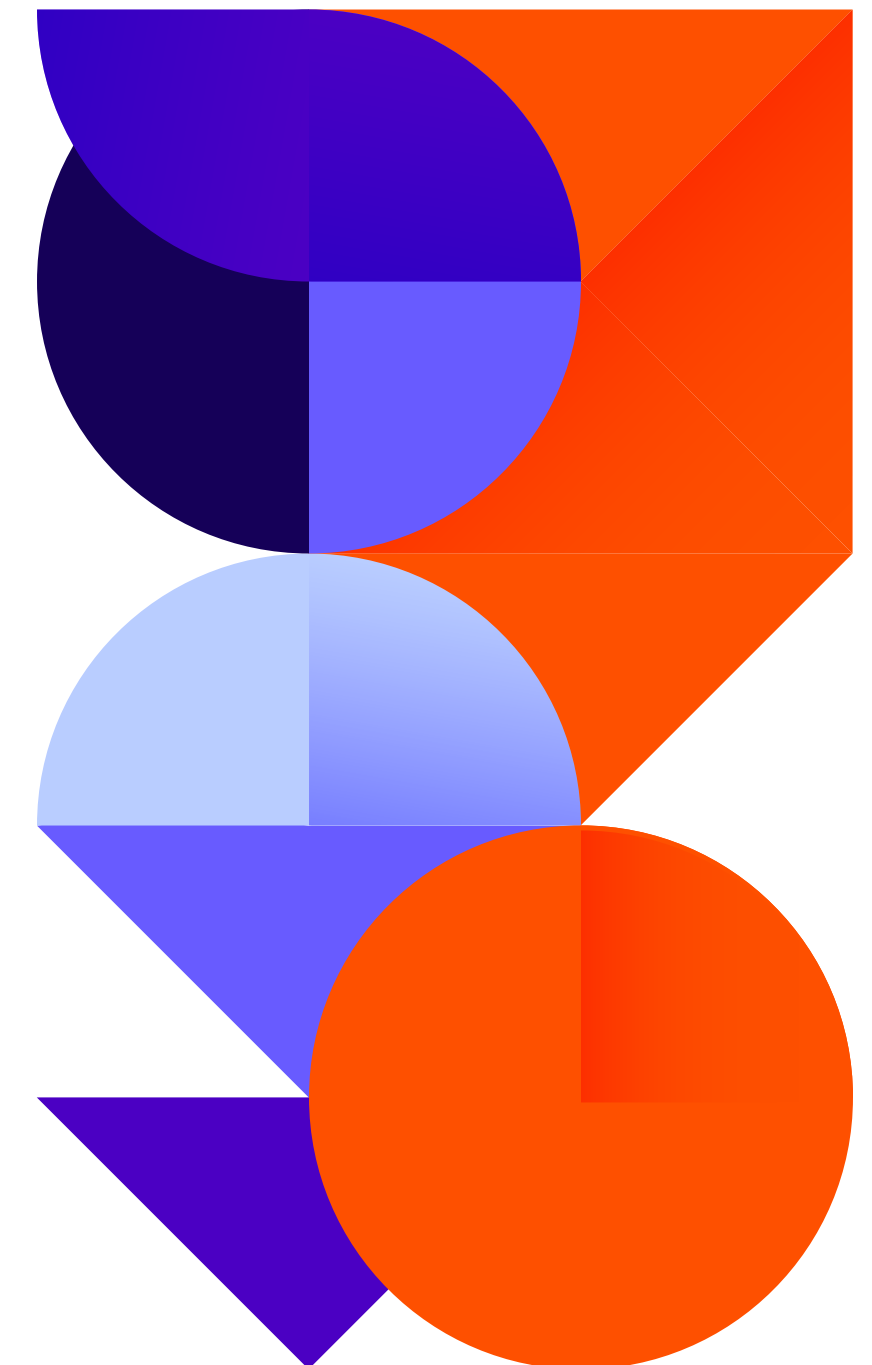
### **Gives you process confidence**

Not only will this give you peace of mind, it'll also significantly speed up the process. Emails and manual approvals become a thing of the past. What's more: since a digital tool lets you see and trace the history of each project, you'll always have immediate access to your digital audit trails. In the case of an investigation or query, that'll allow you to respond with confidence – and within hours, not days.

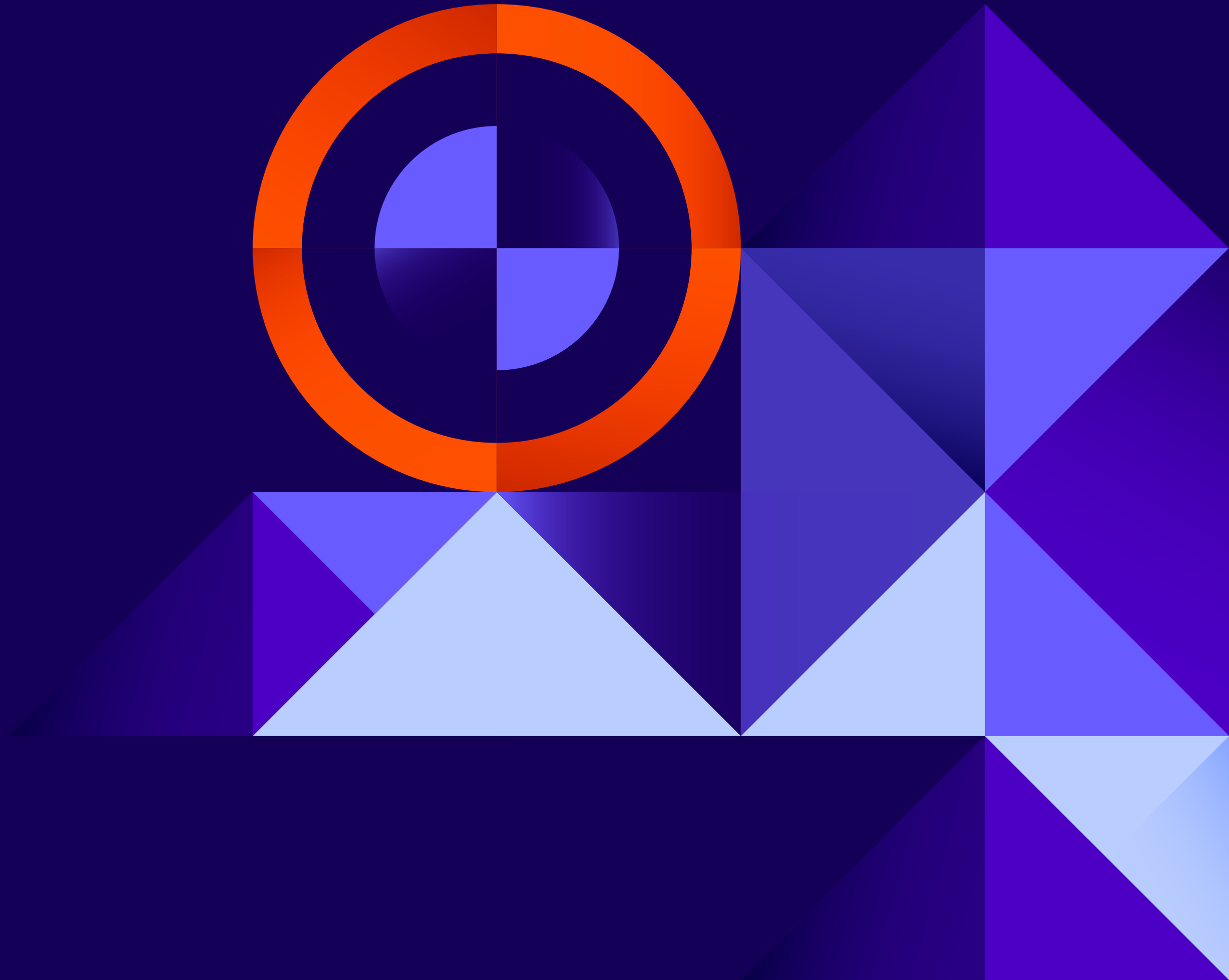
This is a huge step towards improving compliance processes (as well as every contributor's accountability!) at the same time as boosting speed-to-market.

### **Boosts business agility**

An integrated tool that's made with the needs of compliance in mind will help the department be much more proactive, e.g. updating required fields or rules when getting ready for new legislation.

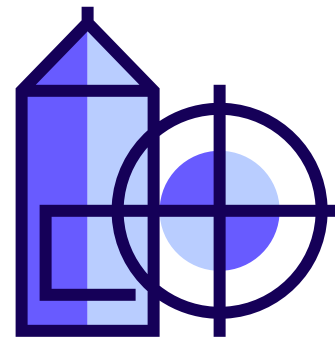


# Labels, artwork and packaging – how to streamline a multi-touch process



# Labels, artwork and packaging – how to streamline a multi-touch process

A connected system will make every stakeholder's life easier – but label and packaging people will feel the difference almost immediately. Why? Because the artwork stage brings a set of unique challenges:



**It's the phase of maximum collaboration, where lots of functions come together:** NPD and planning (for product information); Quality (to ensure regulatory compliance); Packaging (for structural considerations); Marketing (on brand – design and copy); as well as external partners such as translation providers, design agencies and printers, and many more. That creates a complex coordination puzzle.

**Still, nothing is set in stone:** a new supplier, new lab results, a retailer request – last-minute changes are common, and your team needs to remain ready to pivot until the end.

**They needed it yesterday.** This team is most likely to have to absorb the knock-on effect of any delays that have gone before – meaning that, no matter how early they started, they're probably already behind.

So usually at this stage, the people in charge of artwork would go frantically chasing everyone in the business for the latest – and approved – product information, possibly re-key it for the artwork agency, and hunt down translations, all while reviewing design concepts, and ordering proofs from the printer. (It makes us nervous just writing this.)

### **A centralised, end-to-end system can change packaging production in four major ways:**

#### **Boosts quality and reduces risk**

By removing copy and paste (or even re-keying) from the process – and allowing people to access the latest, approved information, they can rest assured they’re working with the most-often checked data they could possibly have – not somebody’s scribbled-on printout.

#### **Empowers the packaging people**

Look for tech that allows even non-design professionals to make changes to product information in an artwork document, without needing

pro software or being able to compromise the file. [4Pack does this by splitting artwork into a dynamic (the product information) and a non-dynamic layer (That’s the design. Can’t touch this.).]

A good tool should also have granular permission management, so you can give external suppliers, like artwork and design agencies, access to the system – which means they can directly up-and download artwork files and other assets – but not touch other parts of the system.

#### **Assists them in checking updates**

A good solution will offer a digital way of comparing versions of artwork files, and makes it easy to check that amends have been made (but nothing else has changed), the correct cutter guide applied, etc.

#### **Automates content output and ensures consistency**

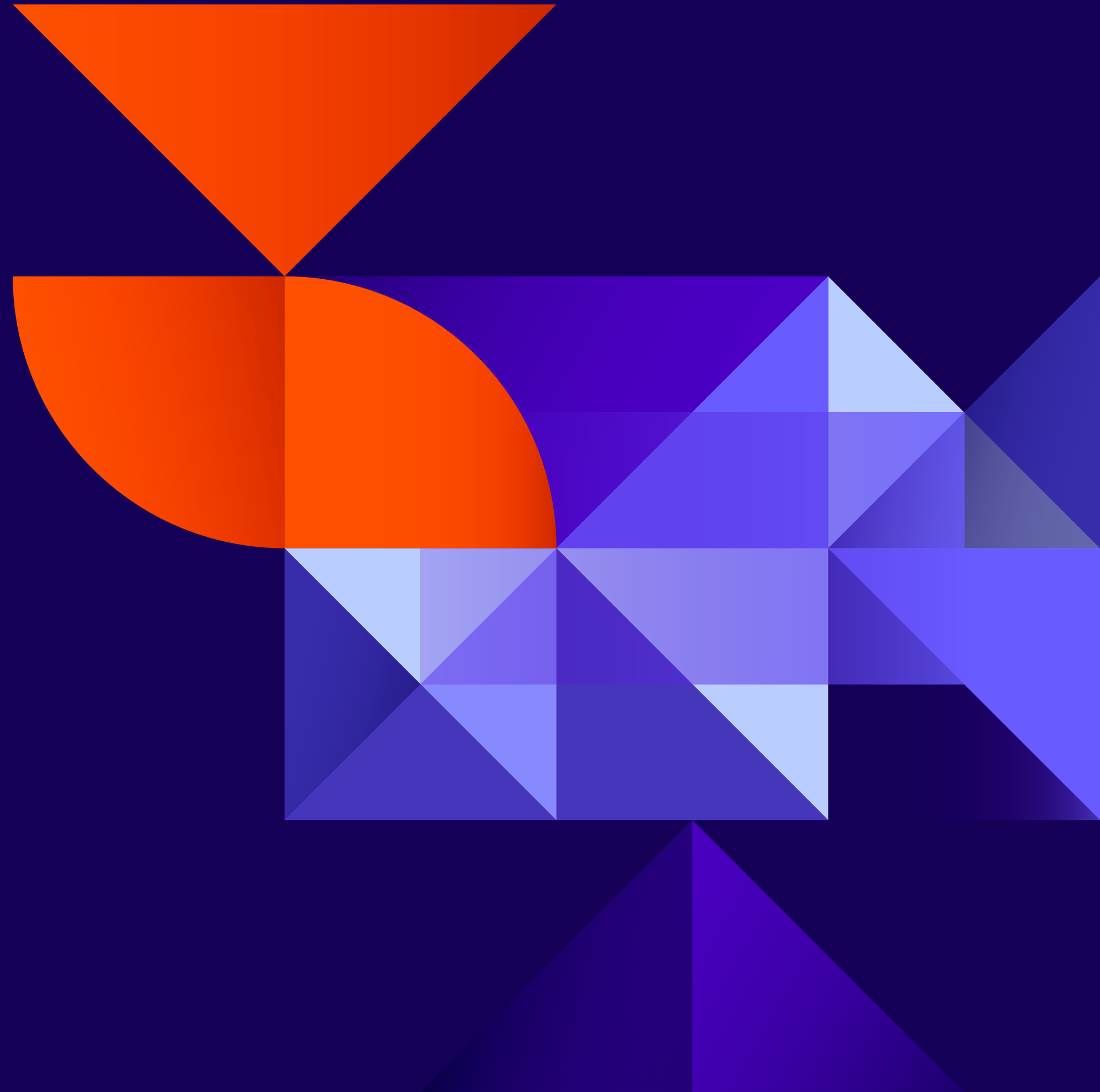
This is the big one. Once set up, such a system can automatically generate a lot of the artwork elements that used to be so hard to come by, from right-sized

logos and icons to the correct nutritional tables, as well as barcodes. Ideally, it will also have an integrated translation memory that can take care of multilingual ingredient declaration.

This is a game changer, not just for speed – but for maximum efficiency and consistency, too. Set it up, approve it, and you can automatically push the correct product information into all your channels (data sheets, syndication portals, smart labels – on and offline, customer-facing or internal). Neat.

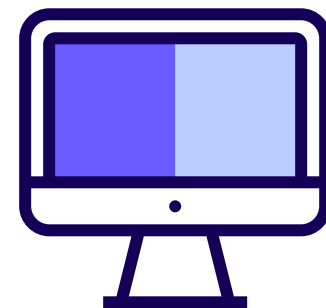


# Marketing – how to give your coordinating function the visibility it needs



# Marketing – how to give your coordinating function the visibility it needs

Marketing has one of the toughest roles to play in the product-to-shelf game. In addition to the jobs you'd expect the department to do (such as branding, naming, design & artwork, retailer and end-consumer comms, etc), marketers often take on the central coordinating function for a launch or update project – making them have to deal both with minute details, and big-picture stuff. So – as you can imagine – the two biggies for them are project visibility, and version control.



**Here's how an integrated solution creates complete transparency for the project co-ordinators:**

## **Gives them the power to plan ahead**

A good end-to-end tool will give them the power to customise the way they want a project to run; to set up internal and external stakeholders; build bespoke workflows; map critical paths; define milestones; and manage their budget. That means more control over the process – with less hands-on work needed to make it happen.

## **Allows them to monitor progress at all times**

A useful piece of tech will allow them to personalise their dashboard – the window into the project. They'll see its complete status quo at a glance and can drill down in detail across the product lifecycle. It's the only way to keep an eye on budgets, key milestones, and where a stakeholder or SKU is in the process, at all times.

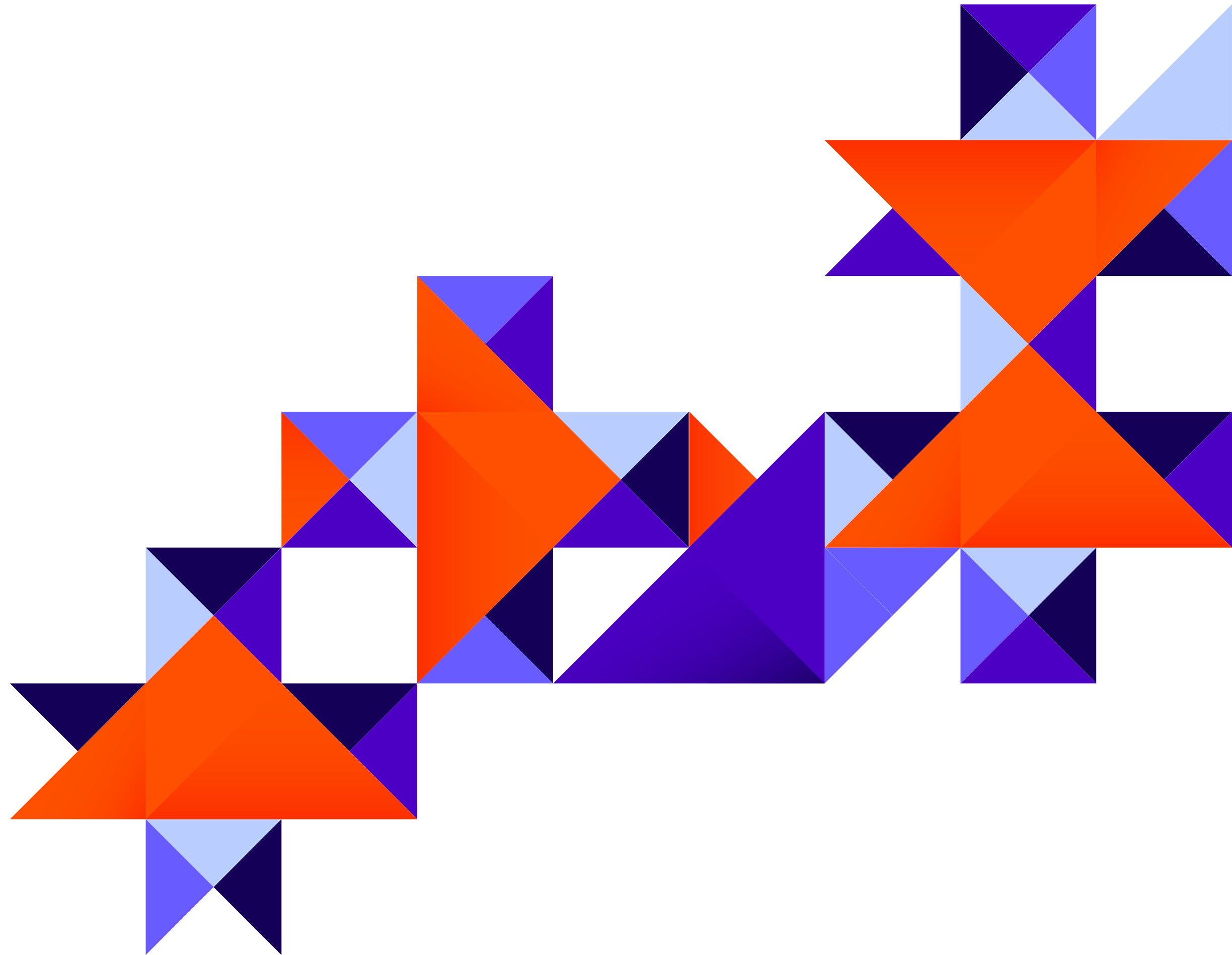


### **Enables them to make informed decisions**

Now that it's possible to spot projects going off-track early, marketers finally get the power to turn reactive decisions into informed choices. And that means that you'll massively reduce the risk of missing a production window, or a delivery deadline.

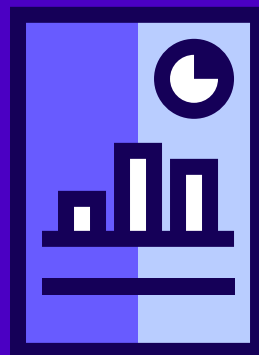
### **Helps them learn for the future**

A dedicated tool will look beyond the immediate project – and fit in with your bigger tech stack. Look for a solution that integrates with your ERP, your CRM, and with other business-critical tech to gain full visibility of the relationship between your product and the supply chain, and how it performs with your customers. It will give you the business insight you need for granular tweaks, and continuous improvement.



# Sticking to spreadsheets is a business crime

If you've made it this far, then we think you'll probably agree with us on this:



The Food & Beverage industry is tough enough as it is, with competitors, margins, regulations and all sorts of pressures making it hard for businesses to focus on the most important thing of them all – creating innovative, profitable products that shoppers will buy. Which, let's face it, is the key to staying relevant with trend-conscious consumers and demanding retailers.

## **The expertise of your people is your innovation capital.**

All those switched-on people that you've managed to assemble are working extra hard to drive your business forward. You can make their jobs exponentially better by giving them a tool that connects them, and lets them all sing from the same hymn sheet.

By removing the friction from product development, you'll empower your people to focus on their areas of expertise, and boost your business from within; and while you're at it, you'll also improve a ton of business-critical KPIs: speed-to-market, cost, quality, productivity, efficiency, and risk.

It's simple, really. Stick with business as usual, and you'll have to throw people and resources at a disjointed process forever. Fix it once and for all, and make continuous, cost-effective innovation – at speed and scale – a reality for your business.

We can help you get there. And we're ready when you are.

# 4 PACK

## We're 4Pack.

Our cloud-based end-to-end product management solution for the Food & Beverage industry has completely changed the way our customers approach – and think about – their product development process.

We've helped dozens of businesses turn their product management processes from bumpy stop-and-go rides into smooth and well-orchestrated workflows. And we'd love to change the game for you, too.

**Get in touch** with Helen Poole at [helen.poole@4-pack.co.uk](mailto:helen.poole@4-pack.co.uk) or on +44 (0)7773 698 950 for a discovery call.



*PS. Want to see how 4Pack has helped other Food&Beverage manufacturers and retailers? [Click here](#) to take a look at some of our case studies.*