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ONE PRODUCT, MANY CHANNELS: Customizing Content for Retail Distribution Points

Customizing product information for company websites, marketplaces, and retail partners is a tedious and time consuming task that takes up critical resources. Here's how one manufacturer was able to automate the publishing of custom formatted data to its retail partners.

The Challenge

A large US-based manufacturer of health and beauty products was struggling to keep its distribution channels in sync with accurate product information.

With a large assortment of several hundred products ranging from cleansers to fragrances and cosmetics, collecting the required product information - and publishing it to all of its destinations - involved a tremendous amount of manual labor and coordination.

Unfortunately, the company's existing systems failed to support this distributed content publishing process.

Numerous out-of-sync copies of critical product content were scattered across spreadsheets and images stored in shared network drives, email, and a legacy and inflexible ERP system.

Team members were also forced to spend unnecessary time formatting excel spreadsheets and individually re-sizing product images to meet the unique requirements of every retail partner.

"The retail community is increasingly putting pressure on manufacturers to deliver quality product information," noted the VP of E-commerce.

"It was a fire drill every time a customer asked for data - we didn't have confidence that we were delivering accurate product information, and it took lots of time to meet individual retailer requirements."

Consequently, the manufacturer was missing critical deadlines for retailer marketing programs and new product launches.

Ultimately, retailers complained, since the time to collect and share a comprehensive view of the product was falling outside their minimum lead time window.

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Automated and Customized Content Distribution

Frustrated with the impact on sales and strained customer relationships, the manufacturer surveyed the technology landscape seeking a solution. "We primarily looked at PIM [product information management] systems," said the project manager, "and were paying special attention to features that allowed us to accurately deliver our product information every time to all of our retail partners."

"Our goals for this project were to cut our product content delivery lead time in half, and make sure the information we send out 1) is accurate and 2) conforms to the individual requirements of our retail partners," recalled the VP of E-commerce.

After an evaluation of several alternatives, they elected to subscribe to Salsify, based on the ease of use, quick implementation time frame, and flexible approach to managing and delivering product content.

With these objectives the manufacturer quickly moved through implementation, loading most of their products into Salsify from their existing spreadsheets the same day they signed up.

The company then used Salsify's built-in search and browsing capabilities to identify content gaps and data inconsistencies across the product line, enabling the company to quickly curate its entire catalog.

Armed with high quality product content, the manufacturer was then able to automate the process of delivering that content to its retail partners.

The company uploaded the template spreadsheets for each retail partner and spent a couple minutes mapping the Salsify fields to the specific columns in the spreadsheets.

They also specified the required image dimensions for each retail partner so Salsify could automatically resize images as needed.

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Finally, the company had Salsify publish all the product content to the retailers' FTP drop locations, and set up automatic publication to these destinations every week.

What's Next

Now that the company has all product content in one place, it is now looking to take advantage of Salsify's workflows that help internal teams become more collaborative during the new product introduction process. By setting up a process that brings together creative, packaging, marketing, and regulatory teams, the manufacturer can collect the required content to introduce new products to market more quickly. Within the month, all departments involved in bringing new products to market will be able to collaborate in real-time in a single platform.

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To learn more about Salsify, visit **www.salsify.com** or send an email to **info@salsify.com**.