



THE ENTERPRISE GUIDE TO PIM READINESS

6 STEPS TO LAUNCH
YOUR PIM PROGRAM



SALSIFY



AVIONOS



ECOMMERCE IS HERE TO STAY.

Industrial purchasing is changing quickly. The shift to eCommerce for B2B accelerated drastically in 2020, leaving digital laggards scrambling to catch up with buyer expectations. Those that adapt quickly stand to gain market share; B2B buyers want digital experiences that mirror consumer experiences, and 81% are willing to pay more for the same product if a supplier has excellent eCommerce capabilities.

Without face-to-face sales opportunities, manufacturers and distributors were incentivized to invest in eCommerce solutions to drive digital revenue. But selecting a technology isn't enough to deliver superior digital experiences; buyers are often left frustrated by unintuitive navigation, barriers to checkout, and too few product details. The most common roadblock on the path to purchase? Lack of product information, according to 59% of B2B buyers. The most effective way to manage product information is with a designated PIM.

WHAT IS A PIM?

Product information management (PIM) solutions refer to software that manages product data and content you need to market your product and drive sales. PIM solutions manage crucial product information like SKUs, prices, digital assets (videos and images), descriptions, or specifications. Aggregating this information, PIMs can syndicate through the digital shelf (distributor websites, marketplaces, digital catalogs, etc.) to reach all places your customers research and buy.



WHAT CAN A PIM SOLUTION DO FOR MY BUSINESS?

Simplify information management processes

Centralize disparate product data in one central repository

Categorize your products for simpler sorting

Analyze product performance through data insights

Standardize pricing across channels and vendors

Reduce errors from manual data entry across multiple teams

Increase buyer confidence and long-term loyalty

Improve efficiency by automating manual tasks



WHY B2B BUSINESSES NEED PIM SOLUTIONS

In B2B, purchasing the wrong product has far greater consequences than in B2C. For a consumer, returning an incorrect order is as simple as asking for a refund at a customer service counter; returning the wrong parts is not nearly as straightforward for manufacturers.

Lack of product information is a barrier to purchase across B2B. Don't take our word for it; Avionos' proprietary research confirms the challenge.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES WHEN RESEARCHING PURCHASES

- 59% Understanding product specifications and configurations.
- 39% Inconsistent product information across channels.
- 19% Finding product or service information that is up to date.

THE BIGGEST PAIN POINTS WHEN MAKING A PURCHASE

- 57% Finding and comparing products and pricing while purchasing online
- 57% Lack of product information on the ecommerce portal or site

B2B PAIN POINTS SOLVED WITH PIM SOLUTIONS

- **Enrich Content:** Take information provided by another system and build content for different audiences and channels. Use data analytics to identify areas to improve product information strategically.
- **Integrate to Manage Inbound Data:** Incorporate data from an ERP, a master data sheet management solution or a spreadsheet.
- **Syndicate:** Provide your product content to third-party marketplaces and distributors for simplified selling.
- **Validate and Cleanse Data:** Leverage internal systems to cleanse and validate data to trigger product workflows for review and approval.
- **Plan Product Releases:** Build out product schedules for releases across channels, audiences, and product segments.
- **Manage Digital Assets:** Manage all digital assets for your products, including images, videos and technical documentation.
- **Leverage Automated Workflows:** Provide detailed approval workflows across departments.



WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LAUNCH YOUR PIM

Like any technology implementation, launching a PIM requires adequate preparation and change management. If you're going to implement a PIM for your business, make sure to consider these common challenges.

LACK OF INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Siloed teams, incorrectly categorized responsibilities, and a lack of communication about ownership can make it difficult for PIM solutions to succeed. Define accountability per role, empower your employees to act as product owners, and hire if necessary to fill capability gaps.

INTEGRATION WITH OTHER TECHNOLOGY

If your business has already invested in a technology stack for your CRM, eCommerce, or marketing automation platforms, it's important to consider integration capabilities before selecting a PIM. Your tech needs to work together seamlessly to enable you to deliver superior digital experiences.

POOR DATA GOVERNANCE

No amount of investment in new technology can overcome poor data governance. Sustainable success requires interdepartmental commitment to data governance and continuous evaluation of practices and processes as revisions become necessary.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND ADOPTION

Ignoring the importance of employee adoption leads to decreased ROI through wasted license spend and decreased productivity. Conduct global training classes to unite new users in a common understanding of tool capabilities and the importance of adoption.

6 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PIM SOLUTION

1. CREATE

Create new products, attributes, and configurations within the PIM. Provide the core attributes needed for the product to be sold, including defining an internal name and SKU.

2. CATEGORIZE

Place your products in a structure that both internal and external users will understand. Be sure to define categorization for customer-facing platforms, manufacturers, and third party sellers to ensure discoverability.

3. ENRICH

Provide detailed information for external audiences, including digital media and content to drive SEO. Don't forget product specifications and any required documentation (white papers, installation and assembly guides, safety data sheets, etc).

4. PLAN & PUBLISH

PIM solutions help you publish to your commerce platform, product marketing organization, and even build your offline product catalog. Don't forget to provide product data to necessary internal downstream systems, including your website and ERP.

5. SYNDICATE

Push your product data out to third-party vendors and marketplaces.

6. ENHANCE

Continually review product information and data insights to improve product information. Remember: There is no such thing as perfect content, only content that's getting better and better.





WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? ADVICE FROM AVIONOS & SALSIFY

Data quality and governance are the foundation that all digital transformation rests on. A PIM is only as good as the data it carries, so while establishing your PIM, make sure you have a data governance program in place that ensures standards and clean data compliance. You should also have the right team in place prior to launch so things run smoothly. This might include an executive, product owners, data analysts, business users, and technology users. The most important point is ensuring everyone is aligned to the same goal and understands how effective PIM will help you get there.

Mousumi Behari

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Manufacturers don't need a PIM to store and manage product content; they need a PIM to use the content through publishing and syndication. Managing content with a PIM makes it easier to provide thorough, comprehensive product information to third party vendors and marketplaces. That said, there's no such thing as perfect product content. Content should be iterated upon and improved every day, week, month and year. By prioritizing continuous improvement, PIM becomes a central tool to connect data to glean insights and update product information strategically for your buyers.

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ABOUT AVIONOS AND SALSIFY



Avionos designs and implements digital commerce and marketing solutions that deliver measurable business outcomes for clients like Kellogg's, JLL and CSA Group. Our iterative approach quickly unlocks new revenue, transforms customer experiences and drives customer engagement. We're ranked on the 2019 and 2020 Inc. 5000 Fastest Growing Companies lists, Crain's Fast 50, Crain's 2018, 2019, and 2020 Best Places to Work in Chicago lists, included on Comparably's 2018 Best Company Culture List and certified as a Great Place to Work. Learn more at avionos.com.



SALSIFY

Salsify empowers brand manufacturers to win on the digital shelf by delivering the commerce experiences consumers demand anywhere they choose to shop online. The world's biggest brands including Mars, L'Oreal, Coca-Cola, Bosch, and GSK use Salsify every day to stand out on the digital shelf. To date, Salsify has raised a total of \$198.1 million in funding, led by Warburg Pincus, Venrock, Matrix Partners, Greenspring Associates, Underscore VC, and North Bridge. For more information, please visit salsify.com.