



## Babolat adds a new D2C sales model thanks to centralized product information management



*“To achieve our growth objectives and develop our direct-to-consumer sales, we needed to implement a more fluid and governed product data enrichment process.”*

- **Guillaume Serodon**, Digital Project Manager at Babolat
- **Emilien Chareyron**, eCommerce Manager at Babolat



### Challenges

- Manage product data quality to ensure completeness, reduce errors, and avoid duplicates
- Handling a variety of data sources specific to markets and sales channels
- Find a solution to interact directly with end customers and simplify localizing product information for cross-border selling



### Benefits

- Improved enrichment process efficiency which led to much higher product data quality
- Centralized product data which avoided redundancy, errors, and ensured relevant data for each sales channel
- Developed a branded sales platform for both B2B and direct-to-consumer (D2C) with product information at the center, making it easier to localize and translate.

## Two objectives: interacting with end customers and offering high quality product information



Babolat was founded in Lyon, France in 1875 as a family-owned company that manufactured the first natural gut strings for tennis racquets. Babolat has since evolved into a specialist in manufacturing and distributing racquets and accessories for tennis, badminton, and other racquet sports. Their products are used by professional and recreational players worldwide. Today, the company employs 370 employees and maintains a global presence. Babolat distributes its products through a network of distributors via a B2B website, a brand showcase website, and a print catalog. Product data enrichment was formerly done via Excel files according to the types of information and formats, an approach that no longer allowed Babolat to efficiently address their digital objectives.

Babolat needed to adapt its sales strategy to meet the expectations of players and retailers around the world while offering them quality product information. Setting up a complementary model of direct sales to the consumer quickly became a necessary step for the group. With this in mind, the work on product data enrichment had to be streamlined to satisfy both a B2B audience of distributors, retailers, coaches, and clubs, and as well as their new direct-to-customer audience of tennis players.




*“Akeneo PIM offers us a flexibility that we could no longer do without. The Serenity version has given us the freedom to focus on our methodology and to be more proactive.”*

## Product data governance: a key step in delivering an MVP in 6 months

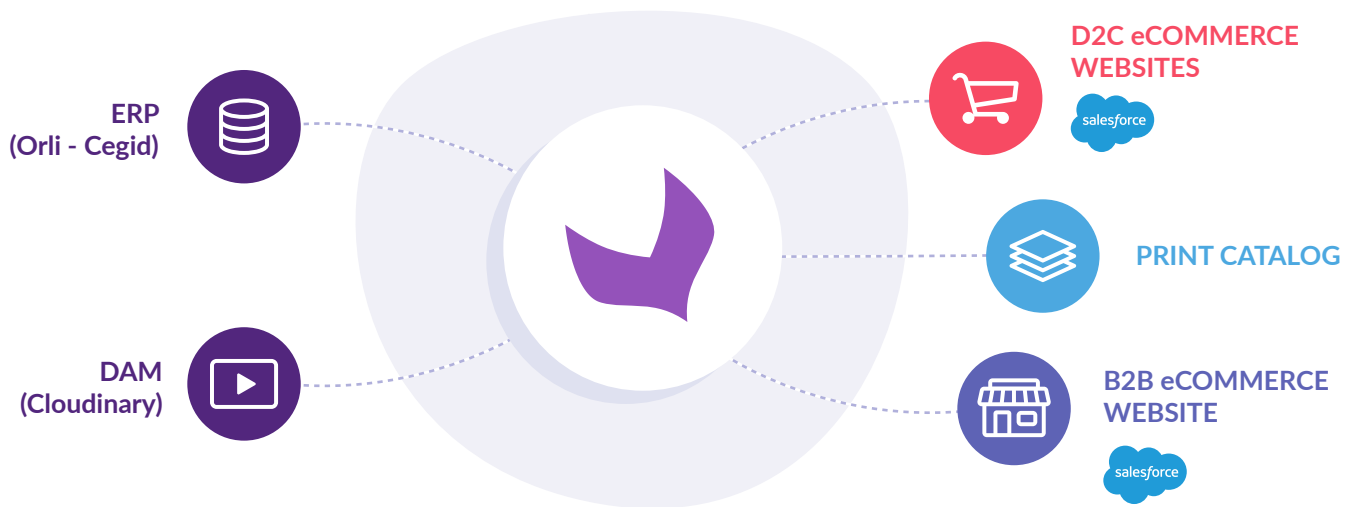
Babolat began by doing in-depth work on product data modeling to better identify the data interactions and structure it required. This “digital factory” approach focused on the different use cases by involving key users from R&D, Product Management, and Sales. This made it possible to simplify the product attribute structure, which resulted in reducing the number of attributes to manage by a factor of three, and define the responsibilities and completion deadlines of each involved team.

Anticipating a need for strong data governance of the enrichment process, Babolat set about looking for a flexible PIM solution that would meet its needs for centralizing and distributing information to all channels and applications that consume product data for marketing. Specifically, Babolat wanted a multichannel-capable solution to feed their B2C website, B2B website, and print catalog.

Akeneo PIM Serenity version was selected as the best solution. The advantage of this SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) version was to offer the ability to integrate a PIM quickly into their technology and process landscape, starting with a “minimum viable product” (MVP) that can be rolled out over time, and be integrated with a DAM (Digital Asset Management), a webshop, and a CRM system. Akeneo PIM Serenity made it possible for Babolat to launch an initial eCommerce solution while benefiting from automatic functionality updates, before tackling the next steps of managing the print catalog. With this solution, Babolat will be able to concentrate on supplying its dealer network with segmented, enriched, and high-quality product data.

-  **Number of users:** 30
-  **Number of products:** 50,000+ SKUs
-  **Data sources:** ERP, DAM
-  **Channels:** 1 international B2B eCommerce website, 3 D2C eCommerce websites, 1 print catalog

## The project at a glance



## Business development, collaboration and product information quality with PIM

### Faster sales in new channels and markets

Centralizing product data has shortened the time it takes to get products ready for sale. Babolat no longer needs to recreate a product catalog for each collection; data can be retrieved from one season to the next. This makes it possible to centrally manage translating product data at headquarters, while relying on the marketing expertise of local product teams. This has enabled Babolat to offer reliable, high-quality product information translated into 8 languages from the launch of its showcase site in Europe and Japan in September 2020. From that point, direct sales to European consumers and Japanese retailers were possible at the end of 2020. Opening new channels and markets is streamlined thanks to this centralized product database.

### Fewer manual tasks means more time for valued-added work

Babolat's teams have saved a considerable amount of time on their daily tasks thanks to the centralization of data and more streamlined consistency of the data enrichment workflow resulting from the work done upstream on data governance. Manual tasks have been optimized and automatic data controls have been implemented. The time spent collecting data for the print catalog was cut by 50%, and made 5 times faster for the web catalog. Saving time and clarifying the role of the different people involved in product data enrichment has empowered employees. They now have more time to work on value-added marketing projects, better prepare new products, and as a result, feel more involved.

### High quality data and a scalable solution for a mixed D2C and B2B sales model

The use of Akeneo PIM has allowed Babolat to deliver complete product data 4 times faster, and reduce the error rate by 400%. This high data quality improves the customer experience as well as the employee experience, since internal teams perform fewer manual tasks. And, the sales teams now have easier access to product data.

The centralized data structure allowed Babolat to move forward on new projects such as opening new markets and the D2C eCommerce websites in target markets with more confidence.

The choice of a SaaS version of Akeneo PIM offers more flexibility and allows Babolat to easily and rapidly benefit from new features as they are released, without having to work on upgrades. Regular updates that include highly anticipated features offer real added value for users who don't need to wait for scheduled upgrades.

“The way Akeneo PIM has made our product data management processes more smooth and seamless has been a key factor in our success, and was essential to meet our digital objectives.”



Visit us at:

[www.akeneo.com](http://www.akeneo.com)

## About Akeneo

Akeneo is a global leader in Product Experience Management (PXM) solutions that help merchants and brands deliver a compelling customer experience across all sales channels, including eCommerce, mobile, print, and retail points of sale. Akeneo's open source enterprise PIM, and product data intelligence solutions, dramatically improve product data quality and accuracy while simplifying and accelerating product catalog management.



For additional information, please visit [www.akeneo.com](http://www.akeneo.com).

© Akeneo 2021. All Rights Reserved.