



# Product Information Management Implementation Best Practices

The data days have arrived. Brands and retailers need to focus more intently on product information than ever before as customers continue to become increasingly interested and invested in the importance of the shopping experience.

In days gone by, most brands and retailers managed their product information via spreadsheets. But as online, mobile, and other commerce channels have proliferated and continued to grow, the limitations of this legacy solution have become obvious. Now, sales and marketing organizations are turning to Product Information Management – also known as PIM – in order to improve product experience, streamline product data management processes and workflows, and increase productivity.

But while PIM is a powerful technology with the potential to improve not just internal operations, but boost sales and reduce product returns, it's important to get it right from the start. To do so, you need to not only focus on choosing the right solution to meet your business needs, but also ensuring a good implementation across your organization to truly realize the PIM benefits.

If your company is ready to get its PIM project off on the right foot, read these top 10 tips and tricks to get the most out of a PIM.

# Top 10 PIM Best Practices



## 1. Define Your PIM Project Objectives and Scope

Before implementing a PIM, determine the main business objectives you need to accomplish, whether that's improving product information quality, accelerating time-to-market, or anything else. This is an essential step to set expectations and define how you'll measure success. With your objectives in mind, you can structure your PIM to support your commerce strategy.



**Pro-tip:** You can slice the cake — it doesn't have to be all or nothing.



## 2. Identify Team and Define Processes

With overall business goals and scope well-defined, you must next identify the team that will be working on your PIM project, determine and assign their roles, and define your optimal product information management process. Make sure you choose the team members who know your products and catalog best — they will ensure that all your PIM project decisions match your business needs and processes.



**Pro-tip:** Build your PIM dream team with your product experts.



## 3. Plan for Team Training and Adoption

A new tool means new habits. In order to get the most out of your PIM project, you need to ensure your team is fully trained. Don't underestimate the change that you are going to impose on your team — getting them to adopt the solution is crucial. Make sure your team has the proper functional training (covering day-to-day use and operation of the PIM) and technical training (covering technical implementation, performance tuning, and system integration) they need to fully understand how to use the PIM and to understand the benefit that comes with fully adopting it for catalog management.



**Pro-tip:** Make sure you get the buy-in of your team for a successful project.



## 4. Determine Your Catalog Structure

Building out your catalog might seem like a simple task at the start if you know your product offering well — but in reality, building an efficient catalog structure requires an in-depth understanding of your product categories, families, variants, and attributes, and how the catalog may be used differently in different sales channels and locales. PIM is more than just a nice interface to create, read, update, or delete items — it is designed to help you model your catalog for all your channels and locales, and define only what your business needs.



**Pro-tip:** Build your PIM to fully embrace your catalog structure and needs.



## 5. Identify Sources and Collect Product Data

In order to make your PIM work best for your organization, you will need to onboard product information from the right sources. Selecting the right sources will facilitate the collection of product data. You'll also need to build a standardized model to consolidate all the data. That way, you can be sure that you start the entire PIM process with the best data coming from the best sources.



**Pro-tip:** Define your incoming product data workflow.



## 6. Automate Catalog Management with Business Rules and Bulk Actions

One of the main benefits of PIM is the variety of automation features your team can utilize to remove tedious and repetitive work, allowing them to focus on creating compelling descriptions. This includes automated completeness detection, imports, and exports. By standardizing and enriching data through automated business rules and managing product data in bulk, your teams can become far more productive.

 **Pro-tip:** Identify and automate low value, repetitive tasks.



## 7. Put Product Data In Context

Enrichment is a core component of the PIM process. It's important to keep enrichment focused on creating emotion in customers and ensuring a compelling product experience. Ensuring your product information is in context for the locale and the channel will create better engagement with buyers, and, ultimately, increase conversions and reduce returns. For omnichannel commerce, this means providing product descriptions that have been adapted to the customer touchpoint, which could entail adding more images for the website and descriptions optimized for voice commerce. Cross-border commerce, meanwhile, it means having relevant product information, in the customer's language, with the right metrics and cultural norms, each efficiently managed in the PIM.

 **Pro-tip:** There's no one-size fits all – adapt your product information for each channel and locale.



## 8. Implement Validation Processes

When managing information for hundreds, or even thousands, of products, it's inevitable that human error will introduce inconsistencies into product descriptions. The important part is catching them before you publish your newest products. Utilize validation features to streamline your approval process by validating newly written copy and the work of field teams, which can help you decentralize content management while maintaining control over product information.

 **Pro-tip:** Automate validation processes to better control your product information quality.



## 9. Distribute Customized Product Information to your Sales Channels

Different sales channels have different requirements for product information. To list a product on Amazon, for example, you need to provide a different set of data than when you're listing on Wayfair. The number of channels is seemingly always increasing, so make sure your PIM is built to handle a diverse array of channels and requirements.

 **Pro-tip:** Make sure your product data export complies with the requirements of each channel.



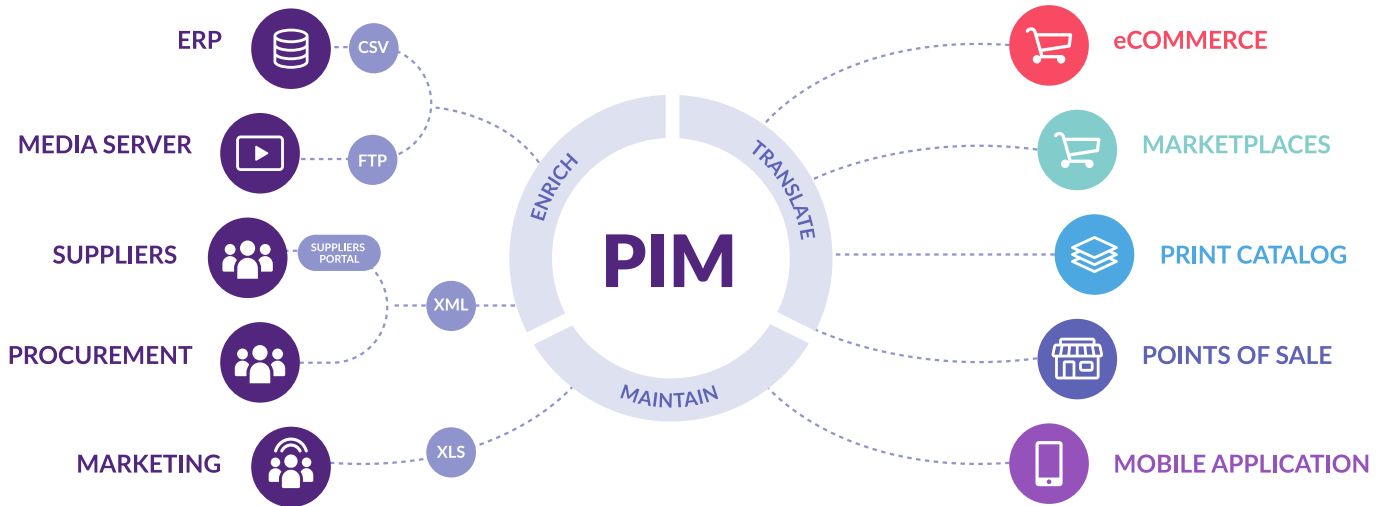
## 10. Collaborate, Track Progress, and Evolve

Implementing PIM is not a one-and-done process – your teams should work collaboratively to track progress over time, so you can adapt and evolve to support your business needs. What's more, the goal of PIM is to help organizations better manage and distribute product information across the board. While these tasks may seem somewhat exclusive to the product or marketing teams, the reality is that using PIM should be an organization-wide collaborative process.

 **Pro-tip:** Implement a PIM solution that can scale to meet your evolving needs.

## Get Your Products to Market Faster and Grow Sales with PIM

Implementing PIM can sometimes seem daunting, but by following the steps we've laid out here, a PIM solution can help your company centralize product information, streamline enrichment, and spread contextualized data to various channels to improve sales within your organization. It can also boost brand and retailer efforts to create the customized omnichannel experiences that customers crave. Stop using outdated tools to manage product data and revolutionize how you handle product information with PIM.



Ready to get your project off the ground and see what PIM could do for you? [Sign up for a demo](#). Want to learn more about the basics of PIM? [Download our eBook Product Information Management 101](#).

