

## Make Omnichannel Retailing Work Better for You and Your Customer with a PIM/MDM System



Multichannel retailing is simply the right move for an enterprise in the 12st century. According to Forrester's December 2015 report Mastering The Art Of Omnichannel Retailing, "Today, \$1.5 trillion in retail sales is generated by customers who start their shopping journey online and conclude it in the physical store". "Online sales combined with web-influenced sales — transactions that occur in a physical store after a customer has first engaged the brand online — now exceed pure in-store sales.", according to Forrester's November 2015 report: One Customer, One Organization, One P&L. The types of shoppers outlined in these statistics make up a force to be reckoned with—and one a retail enterprise certainly wants to target. They represent the newest wave of consumer purchasing patterns, one that's likely here to stay: They use every resource available to them to get what they want, when they want it.

Multichannel retailing capitalizes on this tendency by using various channels—e-commerce, catalogs, brick-and-mortar stores, kiosks, etc.—to target and engage customers. While this is obviously a smart move in retail, it comes with a unique challenge: How does a retailer keep its product and customer information consistent across all of its marketing and sales channels, as well as across the enterprise itself?

This is the aim of omnichannel retailing. According to Forrester's May 2016 report: 2015 Retail Omnichannel Functionality Benchmark, "Omnichannel actions are those activities and processes that harmonize information and resources across digital and store touchpoints to improve customer experiences or retailer efficiency and to drive increased sales, customer satisfaction, resource productivity, or profitability." When done right, omnichannel retailing benefits both the customer and the enterprise.

Four Omnichannel Functionality Categories represent a general idea of what the customer desires and can receive from a successful omnichannel retail experience:

- Online Experience
- Channel Consistency
- In-Store Pick-Up
- In-Store Functionality

A customer's Online Experience regards just that: They want a continuity of information and resources across all of the digital devices they use. Channel Consistency is a little broader: The customer benefits from experiences, resources, and information that are unbroken and consistent across not only their digital devices but in-stores as well.

The two final Omnichannel Functionality Categories focus on in-store experiences. When a customer selects or purchases something online but chooses to pick it up in-store, they want their in-store pick-up experience to be all-encompassing, including notifications about their selection or purchase, as well as information regarding its availability, the in-store wait time, and the store's location(s). The customer benefits from omnichannel capabilities within stores themselves as well, with experience-boosting options like "save the sale."

The retailer, of course, wants their customers to be happy and satisfied because happy, satisfied customers lead to sales. On a more technical level, however, the retailer benefits less from experiences and more from data, particularly when it is relevant, trustworthy, and insightful.

A retailer needs the data that it gathers to be relevant, so it can be used to adopt policies that align with its strategies. A retailer needs to be able to trust that its data is high-quality, consistent, and accurate. Finally, an enterprise benefits most from data when it brings insights into products and customers because drawing meaningful conclusions about products and customers leads to better decision-making.

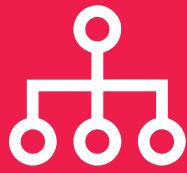
Omnichannel retailing that appeals to both customers' and the retailer's needs seems complex. A product information management (PIM) system makes it easy because it optimizes customer experience by allowing a retailer's digital assets creation team, content creation team, marketing team, etc. to tailor their content based on the data. A PIM/MDM (master data management) system becomes the source of truth for an enterprise, the centralized source of data.

## **Product Information Management (PIM)**

A PIM/MDM system provides a robust selection of capabilities that support the omnichannel experience:

- Flexible Data Modeling
- Multiple Containers for Hierarchy Management
- Robust Data Governance
- Multi-Channel Data Syndication
- Business Rules for Automation
- Product Extensions





#### FLEXIBLE DATA MODELING

### Flexible Data Modeling

Data modeling is essential to providing customers with the best experiences possible. A PIM/MDM system's flexible data modeling allows an enterprise to model data based on market offerings, product seasonality, customer segments, and more.

### Multiple Containers for Hierarchy Management

Extension containers of the master container are crucial for organizing subsets of data that target particular customer segments, sales seasons, geographies, etc. Yet it's also necessary for all extension containers to remain in synch with the master container. A PIM system is designed to do just that, ensuring that data across the enterprise is not only organized, but "talking" to other data in other containers so that all messages and efforts are in synch.



#### ORGANIZATION, BRAND & CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

### Robust Data Governance

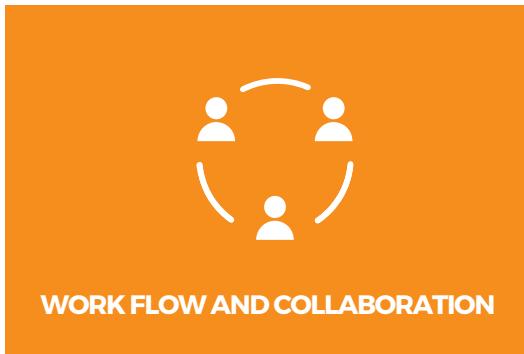
When handling data from various sources and regarding various arms of an enterprise, the consistency of data governance policies and procedures is necessary. A PIM/MDM system workflow makes this the case even as an enterprise standardizes the customer onboarding process and/or product introductions.

### Multichannel Data Syndication

Multichannel retailing is significantly more complex than single-channel retailing. A PIM/MDM system ensures that master information as well as channel-specific information is managed. When information is centralized and integrated with marketing and sales channels, a brand can remain consistent, which makes it stronger.



#### DATA INTEGRATION



## Business Rules for Automation

Within a PIM/MDM system, an enterprise can use business rules to create and convert data automatically so that it matches destination containers that contain product data for specific geographies, business units, or catalogs.

## Product Extensions

In the spirit of connection, collaboration, and integration, a PIM tool allows users to extend a product from the master collaboration container to an extension container. This results in faster product introductions and allows for efficient management of specific brand needs and catalogs.



When the functionalities above are combined, it's not difficult to see how a PIM/MDM system eliminates many of the problems associated with omnichannel retailing. Where an omnichannel strategy without a PIM/MDM system suffers from customer dissatisfaction with things like errors in orders and inconsistent information, a strategy with a PIM/MDM system reduces the chances of errors overall—internally and customer-facing—increasing satisfaction. Where an

omnichannel strategy without PIM/MDM struggles with a long time to market for new products and finds it challenging to quickly expand product assortments, a PIM/MDM system streamlines processes, so product introductions are quicker, not to mention consistent across all channels, digital and otherwise.

## Integrated PIM- MAM Case study

Riversand Technologies provides PIM/MDM solutions to a wide range of retailers. An effective solution was recently provided to a worldwide producer of welding and cutting equipment and consumables and automated welding and cutting systems.

With over 8,700 employees and facilities spread out across 4 continents, this enterprise was constantly integrating new data systems to keep up with 25,000 SKUs and 1,300 product lines.

Unfortunately, these systems, which were supposed to do the work of one PIM system, resulted in data scattered across four ERP systems, inconsistent product information, repeating product entries, and marketing descriptions that differed.

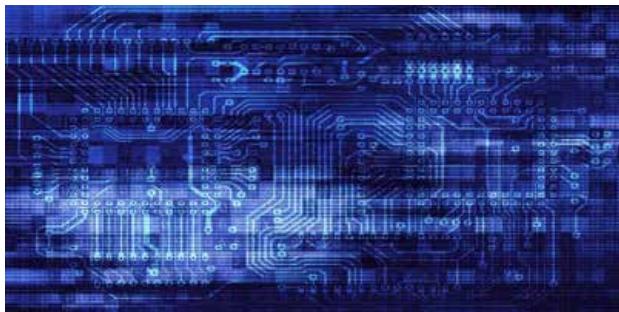


After Riversand implemented its PIM tool, MDMCenter, and its Media Asset Manager (MAM), the first step was to clean up the product data. Where there were conflicts, Riversand identified the correct source of master data. An individual set of data governance policies was instituted, so data became standardized, and MDMCenter defined itself as the only source of truth for product data. All lower-level systems retrieved what they needed from it.

As a result of this centralization and clean-up, the retailer lowered its cost of ownership by retiring legacy systems in favor of this single point of reference. MDMCenter and MAM made marketing efforts less labor-intensive, which ultimately reduced marketing headcount. Finally, instead of individual departments around the world loading their own product descriptions into the system, single product descriptions with translations were loaded into MDMCenter, ensuring that customers receive consistent, reliable information, no matter where they live or shop.

## Case study: Reduced New Product Introduction timelines

Riversand also successfully extended MDMCenter to an IT solutions provider. This IT solutions provider employs multiple channels, including specialized IT product catalogs, websites, and more. They needed a single-point reference system for production information. Riversand's MDMCenter harnessed the aggregation of classification and product information from a number of sources. In addition, adapters quickly onboarded data from clients' data feeds and data pools.



significant cost savings. Additionally, it was able to decrease its content management team by 33% with no hit to its productivity.

The result was a huge competitive advantage for the retailer: New Product Introduction timelines were reduced by 80%, and MDMCenter achieved almost real-time data syndication by improving performance and scalability. Because ineffective PIM legacy systems were retired, the enterprise enjoyed significant cost savings. Additionally, it was able to decrease its content management team by 33% with no hit to its productivity.

In the world of the future, omnichannel retailing provides the standardization and security that multichannel retailing requires to truly succeed. Boost your brand and your business with solutions from Riversand Technologies.



Riversand is an innovative leader in Master Data Management, powering industries from the world's largest to SMBs. Riversand's single integrated, scalable and robust multi-domain MDM platform caters to a variety of use cases across multiple verticals. In addition Riversand offers specific solutions such as Vendor Portal, Spare Parts Management, Material Master, GDSN on-boarding, Media Assets Management, Print Publishing etc. Business value which Riversand provides include accelerated time-to-market, increased sales, improved order accuracy, reduced costs and enhanced customer service. Customer satisfaction is at the heart of Riversand's innovation.

For more information, visit [Riversand.com](http://Riversand.com) and follow @RiversandMDM on Twitter.

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