

4 steps to perfect online product marketing

how can businesses balance the need for cost-effective solutions with the need to invest in new technology?



at a crossroads

As the industrial world has been slowly recovering from the severe lockdown restrictions, many entrepreneurs have started looking for new opportunities to restart their business growth in the post-Covid era.

One promising avenue is to explore new channels, even in traditionally rigid markets where personal sales were once the only option.

With this shift towards digital communication, evaluating and upgrading internal IT systems has become crucial to reaching both new and existing customers.

However, business owners are faced with difficult decisions when

confronted with the results of IT platform evaluations.

Should they stick with their current spreadsheets and emails, hoping to maintain market share in a fast-paced and competitive environment? Or would they benefit from investing in onsite infrastructure, purchasing new software licenses, and expanding their internal IT department to streamline business processes?

Alternatively, would a cutting-edge marketing platform be the key to getting products to customers faster, in greater quantities, and with minimal human effort?

Read on to find out.



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According to recent [Statista research](#), nearly 70% of consumers search for products information and reviews online before making a purchase. This means that online product marketing is more important than ever, and the journey to success begins with product data.

1. product data

Try to imagine what kinds of additional information your sales staff regularly provides your customers so they can make a qualified purchase decision. That can include detailed product specifications, customer reviews, images or videos showcasing the product use.

The ultimate goal is to collect & manage as complete product data as possible to simplify, shorten and automate the business cycle.

The data collection process usually starts with creating a shopping story from customer's perspective,

continues with setting the goals and purposes the data will serve, and includes an assessment of actual data sources and data quality.

The result of these exercises is a new product data model and workflows to control high-quality standards required by all market channels.

It often helps at this stage to look at the product data as the most valuable asset in your company. The product data model accommodates not only the product categories, but also SKU numbers and sets of technical parameters.

This model will also help your product management team learn how to enrich the product with

catchy marketing descriptions, professional imagery, technical and safety data sheets, as well as, legal documents, translations to multiple languages, and other dimensions essential for your business.

Such complex data structures go far beyond the capabilities of flat files such as Excel spreadsheets.

Despite the fears that many industrial product managers have about the high complexity of their products, a carefully selected Product Information Management (PIM) tool should easily cover all the above-mentioned features & provide a solid base for further development of IT architecture.



2. online catalogue

In both B2B and B2C models, an online product catalog is becoming an increasingly important source of information for customers.

While the ever-evolving marketplace offers new channels and opportunities to capture customers from unusual target demographics, incorporating a product catalog into a business website is still the easiest and most cost-efficient method to showcase the company product offerings.

A simple implementation mirrors the product data model created in PIM with a hierarchy of categories, marketing content, images, attachments, etc., and displays all the content in one or more web templates according to the company's style guide and branding.

The online product catalog is powered by a Content Management System (CMS) that also supports the maintenance of other content, such as news, services, store locations, FAQs, and more.

When thinking of a product catalog just as a normal website, there are several critical factors should not be overlooked. Is the web application built on a future-proof technology?

The preference should always go to an open-source development stack and verified software architecture such as MVC. Does the user interface bring a flawless experience to expected conversions? Moreover, does it comply with the current web accessibility standards & regulations?

Even though user research and accessibility audits may seem like additional expenses during web implementation, they are becoming increasingly crucial & can give your business a competitive advantage. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the basics of SEO to improve the visibility of your products on search engines like Google. Despite this, many websites still fail to prioritize SEO best practices.



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Having a strong online presence is crucial for any business. However, simply having a website is not enough. To stand out from the competition and attract potential customers, your website needs to be optimized for user experience and conversions.

One way to achieve this is by utilizing various integrations.

3. integrations

Whether you already have a product catalog section on your website or plan to get a new one built, take a look under the hood and discover how it can benefit you.

Integrating the following features and platforms can help you achieve better results in online product marketing.

Whereas good SEO helps to attract more users from the organic search, an enterprise search platform integrated into your website improves user experience when searching for content while they are already browsing it. Many studies have shown that internal search capability correlates with higher conversions.

When users submit an inquiry form, the best practice is to create an account in CRM (Client Relationship Management) system. Not only for processing the inquiry but also for nurturing the lead through the funnel workflows and converting it into a loyal customer.

Integrating online marketing and automation tools can help you get as much information about customer behavior as possible. This data is used for better segmentation, it evaluates the search intent and allows to address customers' needs with the most appropriate, personalized content at the right time.

Some websites contain a lot of media content – images, videos, documents, templates, large binary files, etc. If this is your case, the best option might be to store this data in a Digital Asset Management (DAM) system. Not only does it provide automatic workflows to produce

the optimized versions for multiple devices, but also it allows the distribution of such content via Content Delivery Network (CDN) worldwide in a fast and efficient manner.

A recently rising trend worth noting is MACH architecture - a simple pattern based on Microservices, API-first, Cloud-based, and Headless technologies, that allows having pluggable, scalable & replaceable integrations.

All these features bring order and control to the integration layer between systems, being either customer-facing channels, back-office management tools, or 3rd party services.

Choosing the right approach at an initial phase of an integration project may save significant resources when adding or replacing a component of a composable architecture later.



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When it comes to buying and selling to the European region, overwhelmingly the business' website is the preferred channel to acquire new consumers and inform visitors towards a sale.

According to a survey of B2B buyers, almost three-quarters of respondents said they'd switch to a new ecommerce site for better purchasing options.

4. ecommerce

Consider the advantages of providing your sales team with access to your entire product catalog, allowing them to manage tier prices, generate custom quotes, and create orders, dispatch notes, and invoices.

Meanwhile, other teams can focus on overseeing the logistics process, including monitoring stock levels, managing backorders, tracking codes, and processing returns.

By leveraging e-commerce platforms, businesses can streamline their B2B operations and improve their overall efficiency. It's essential to consider all the benefits e-commerce platforms offer beyond just online sales functionality.

On the contrary, for businesses that do sell their goods online, the feature set is even more promising: customers can easily create wish lists, store multiple shopping baskets, repeat orders, or manage payment details, of course, in a PCI compliant way.

The online marketers have simple administration interfaces for adding shipping and payment methods, creating discounts and other promotions, watching conversions in neat management reports.

Modern e-commerce platforms provide all of these features either with a friendly user interface or in a headless mode to integrate with existing channels for the best customer experience.

With extensive experience in implementing B2B projects, we recognize that not all B2B customers benefit from selling their products online. However, it's important to note that e-commerce platforms offer more than just cart and checkout functionality on a website.



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Digital leaders in B2B achieve up to 5x the revenue growth and up to 8x the EBIT (earnings before interest and taxes) growth of their peers. But so far, only one in three companies has deployed digital solutions at scale.

the right time is now

Business owners who have familiarized themselves with the four previous steps may realize that not all of them are matching their needs. That is natural.

Some companies have started their digital transformation journeys and already have some pieces of architecture in place. For other firms some of these proposed solutions will not be relevant at all.

The important factor in any case is time. The average duration to implement an online marketing platform is between 6 to 12 months. Thus, the right time to choose the next direction at the crossroad is now, because the competition won't wait.

If you're looking to achieve success in the digital marketplace, expand your business either geographically or product-wise, or simply need a professional advice on relevant topics, do not hesitate to reach out our customer helpdesk.

Our expert teams at Actum & inriver are ready to guide you through the best approach in any situation, offering advice on project preparation, delivery methods, and budget control.

Book your free consultation and leave your competition behind. Whether you're facing specific challenges or want to explore new opportunities, our teams are here to help you achieve your goals.

Empowering Customers with Digital Platforms

Current Market Situation

67% of businesses have introduced new product information technology within the last year.

88% of respondents say they face more competition than a year ago.

When to add a PIM solution

SKU number is growing, making it impossible to manage via spreadsheet and email.

Data Analysis becomes challenging as number of products and channels grows, making it difficult to make a decision.

Operations are inefficient and do not bring the desired results.

Reason for implementing PIM solution

PIM provides a central hub for your product information, streamlining content creation and distribution across all channels – including your commerce site.

Ensures that displayed product information is always up-to-date.

Centralizes product information in one repository and makes it easy to bulk update product data.

Allows to create, edit & update product information in one location and those changes are reflected on every channel, with a single click.

Expected impact on business

30% faster in making changes to product catalogue.

10-18% higher online purchase growth due to content completeness.

8x faster delivery of information.

20% uplift in orders after implementing PIM.

50 hrs. saved by removing manual manipulation and automating content re-creation efforts.

Who are we?

One of the largest independent digital agencies in Europe, ACTUM Digital is a team of more than 300 digital experts working in 3 European offices on hundreds of projects in more than 15 languages for important global clients.

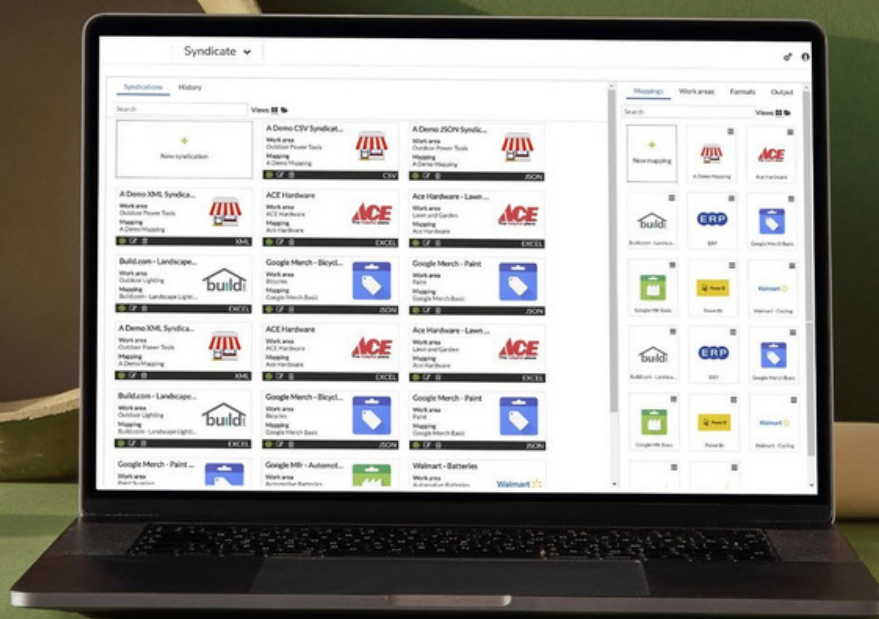
**the bottom line:
scalable businesses
need PIM and commerce**

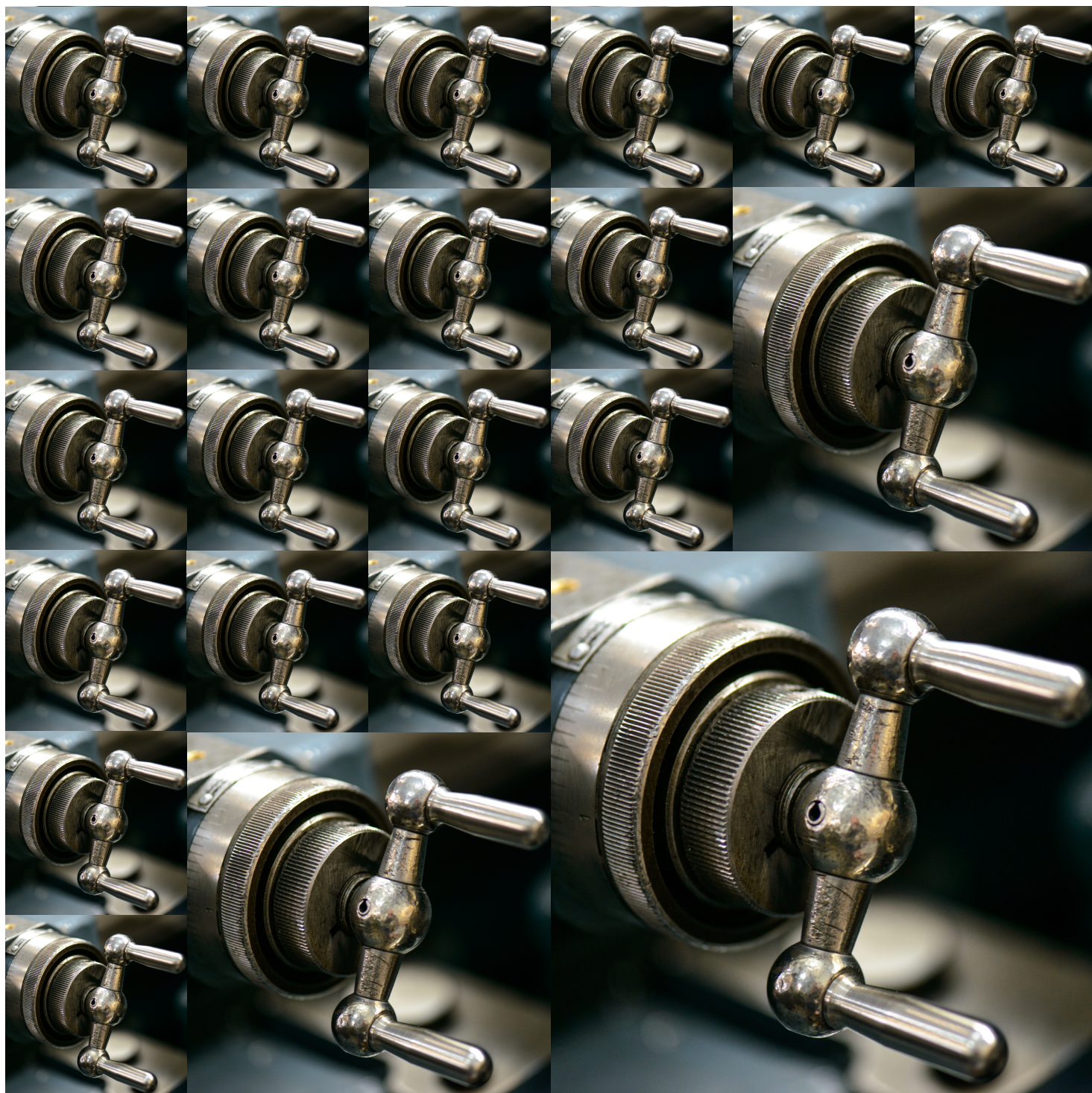
Think about it this way:

If your focus is selling direct, commerce-first is an excellent way to go.

If your focus is on channel sales and managing complex product information, PIM-first makes the most sense.

Regardless of which approach you take, once you've addressed one element, solve the other. You cannot effectively scale your digital business without both PIM and commerce.





ACTUM Digital is an agency headquartered in Prague, Czech Republic, with more than 25 years of experience from hundreds of digital transformation projects for a vast range of global clients. Recently we signed a partnership with inriver to deliver even better solutions for product management together.

www.actumdigital.com

inriver is a leader on the PIM market with headquarters in Malmö, Sweden. They were founded in 2007, and since 2017 they have been providing SaaS-only product for more than 1700 brands worldwide. The core of the product is their Elastic data model that enables accommodation of product-related requirements from any industry.

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