



Why start digital transformation with PIM?



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Digital transformation priorities are now center stage as the pandemic accelerated the need for digital commerce across sectors and verticals. Businesses know that to survive, they must adapt - taking a digital-first approach. The executive(s) tasked with leading a digital transformation effort needs to consider many different, and often competing priorities and factors:

- The role of foundational systems
- Building omnichannel experiences
- Content alignment and the customer journey
- Employee and partner impact
- Executive and IT priority setting

Usually a digital transformation involves a variety of IT-led projects that bring the strategy to life. Often these entail entirely new programs which shake up the status quo, open new revenue channels, and help your company leapfrog the competition - or better yet, reveal an entirely new, uncontested market.



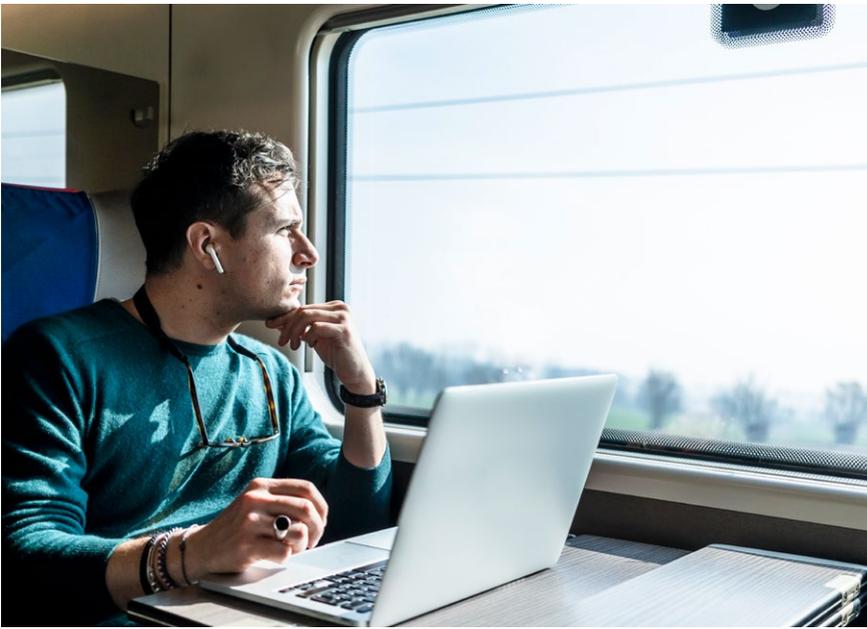
the role of foundational systems in digital transformation

A digital transformation requires many important decisions. The most important include deciding on the right foundational systems for collecting, organizing, and updating employee, customer, product and financial data. You need systems that are fully integrated with the other customer, prospect, and employee-facing solutions your company uses. The foundational systems must seamlessly work with the more outwardly visible solutions such as call center applications, website platforms, portal information solutions, and e-commerce technologies. The more efficient and integrated the underlying foundational technology solutions are, the faster you will be able to accelerate your transformative change.

For example, if you have a custom, legacy order management system not integrated with your e-commerce and financial solutions, you have a real operational headache on your hands. Employees will have to spend

considerable time running manual band-aids to keep the data flowing into all the systems. This might mean maintaining duplicate information in multiple systems or performing regular spreadsheet uploads and downloads. Or, worst case, having to re-enter information more than once into more than one system. This scenario can also be very dangerous as it is ripe for catastrophic data errors.

As the executive leading the data transformation, you might be tempted to focus on flashier quick-hit projects and overlook the functionality and integrated state of these foundational systems. However, if you don't make upgrades to foundational systems one of your highest priorities, you will not have the level of success you and your company need and create a competitive disadvantage you can't afford. These foundational systems can be transformation accelerators for your business.



“Before, product managers had to check 18 catalogs to be sure the data was correct. Now they know that when they approve the information in inriver, that the content is approved in one place for all the catalogs. This is definitely a benefit.”

- Ruth Müller, Strategic Project Manager, Camfil

PIM: a core foundational digital transformation solution

A new product information management solution is one of those core foundational solutions you must implement in the early phases of your digital transformation journey. Why? COVID-19 has given a turbo boost to e-commerce, forcing businesses to make the shift online. With consumers having even more choices than before, competition is fierce, and it is truly global. By optimizing your digital strategies and processes you can quickly pivot and adapt to changing needs, whatever they may be, at scale.

Product Information Management (PIM) provides a centralized hub to consolidate, manage, and enhance all of the information about your products. This ensures an accurate and up-to-date repository of everything everyone needs to sell your products across any channel or marketplace.

A PIM solution provides the automated collection and distribution of accurate product information throughout your organization. It accelerates digital transformation because it frees up staff and avoids duplicate entry and

management. It provides consistent information for both the internal product development process and the external customer journey. It turns product information into strategic assets to drive revenue.

A PIM solution delivers:

- Correct and up-to-date information deployed at any time across all channels consistently
- A generic data model for managing product information, both for existing and planned omnichannel initiatives
- Structure and content adapted for information-consuming systems and channels
- Full control over all channels, at all times; new channels can be quickly populated with customized, channel-specific product information
- A foundation for your organization's overall product content strategy



“Change the product information in one place and have it published in all channels in about 15 minutes.”

- Jonas Taube, Advertising Manager, Coop Sverige

PIM: the platform for an omnichannel experience

No one could have predicted the impact COVID-19 would have. The pandemic has changed the buying journey forever. Now more than ever, reaching your buyers and sellers across all channels is critical. Businesses now need to ensure they effectively manage and optimize these online offerings.

Accurate product information is a key component for success in omnichannel commerce, and an important core practice in digital transformation. Providing complete and consistent product information across all channels is an essential part of creating a great customer experience building trust, and brand loyalty.

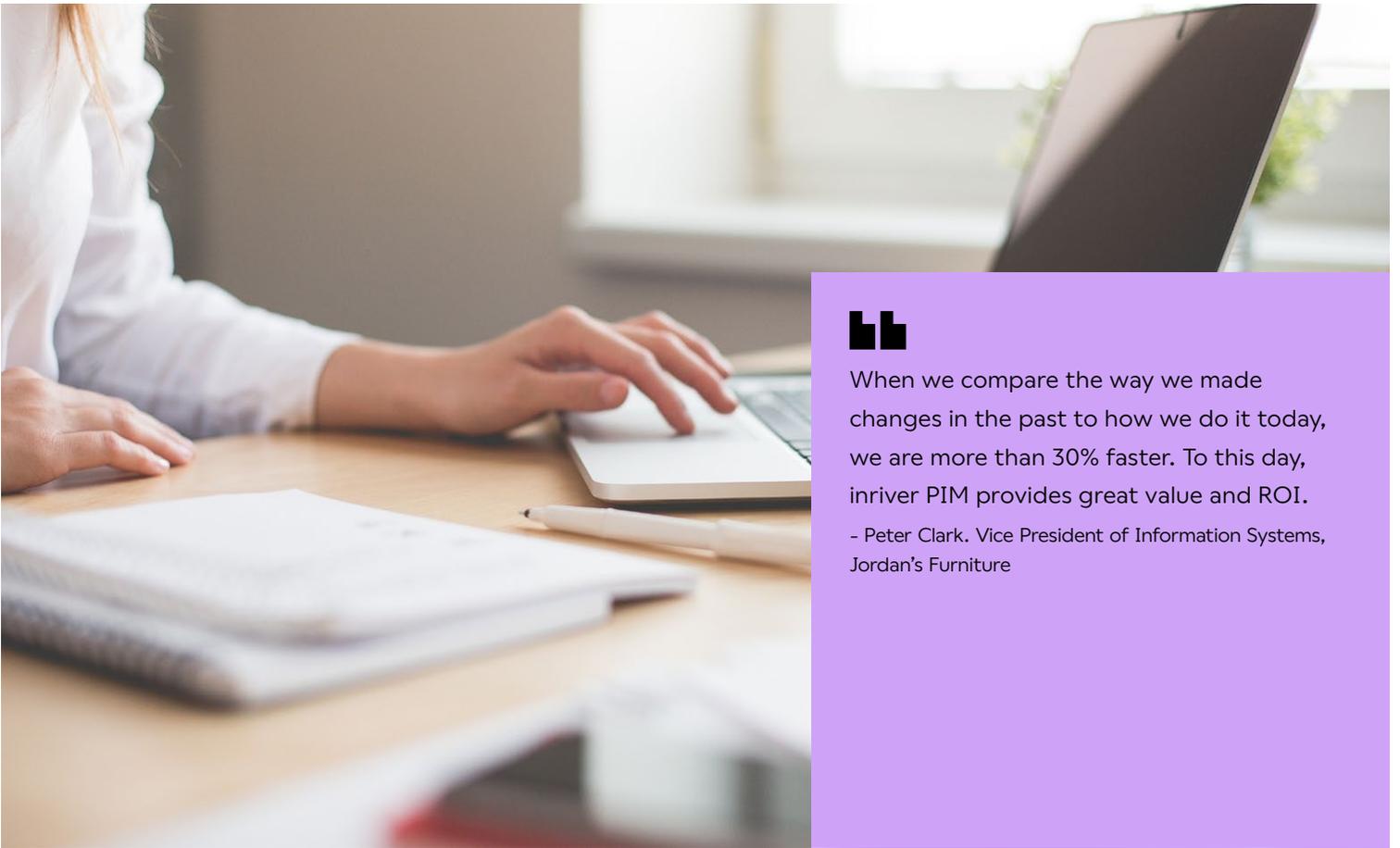
Personalization, SEO, and search all depend heavily on high quality, engaging, high-volume, and granular content to deliver a stellar customer experience and increase sales. To get the most out of your customer-facing platforms and other digital initiatives, you need to fuel them with the content they require. Start with developing and prepping your content before you go live with any new digital initiative. Identifying everything required for every customer, every channel, and

every touchpoint is absolutely essential.

Regardless if the content will be used by a retailer, distributor, Google, Amazon, a printed catalog, brand website or e-commerce solution, each channel should receive the targeted information needed in order to tell your product stories in the most effective way.

When all product information is in a PIM, you can quickly populate new channels with high-quality product information, make changes in one place, and update all channels with the new information directly from the PIM system.

A PIM system facilitates the channel-independent development of digital e-commerce and marketing strategies. With this as your backbone, you can expand into new markets and channels faster, without limiting your capacity for managing these channels. Your content can easily be adapted to any context. Implementing a best-of-breed PIM solution into your system landscape is a relatively rapid process, especially if your chosen solution integrates with your current and future channel-specific systems.



When we compare the way we made changes in the past to how we do it today, we are more than 30% faster. To this day, inriver PIM provides great value and ROI.

- Peter Clark, Vice President of Information Systems, Jordan's Furniture

aligning content to the customer journey

Moving a customer through the buying process requires different content compared to the content needed for brand awareness, education, and building customer loyalty. According to a study by eMarketer, the customer journey is no longer linear. Many buyers who begin their journey in one medium or device end their journey elsewhere¹.

Even before the global pandemic, buyer behavior was changing, Forrester highlighted that 67% of the buyer's journey was done digitally. It's not hard to imagine how the 'new normal' will continue to drive buyers to e-marketplaces, online stores, and other digital channels. The need for content across all channels, at all stages of the buying journey—in a suitable format for all devices—is now greater than ever.

The best place to start is carefully selecting the product information to be used, determine how it can be sourced or created and where it needs to be rendered. Establishing a strong foundation for your e-commerce product catalog is worth your time and resources to deliver the relevant product information your customers need to make the best possible buying decision.

Omnichannel initiatives require an uncomplicated, channel-agnostic, and straightforward approach. This approach enables your organization to create a foundation to produce high-quality information with support from a reliable, predictable, and repeatable process. And digital transformation requires a close look at these new dynamics and establishing a strategy for the development of product information today's consumers demand.



Thanks to inriver, we're able to use our product data in different and more sophisticated ways. Our product information is of higher quality and better structure, which means we can bring products to market much faster.

- Björn Wiman, E-commerce Manager, Office Depot

PIM: delivering digital transformation for employees and partners

A PIM solution will certainly help deliver omnichannel excellence and it can be a huge transformative driver internally as well. For many companies, having new channels available to buyers means more work for your employees – a lot more work.

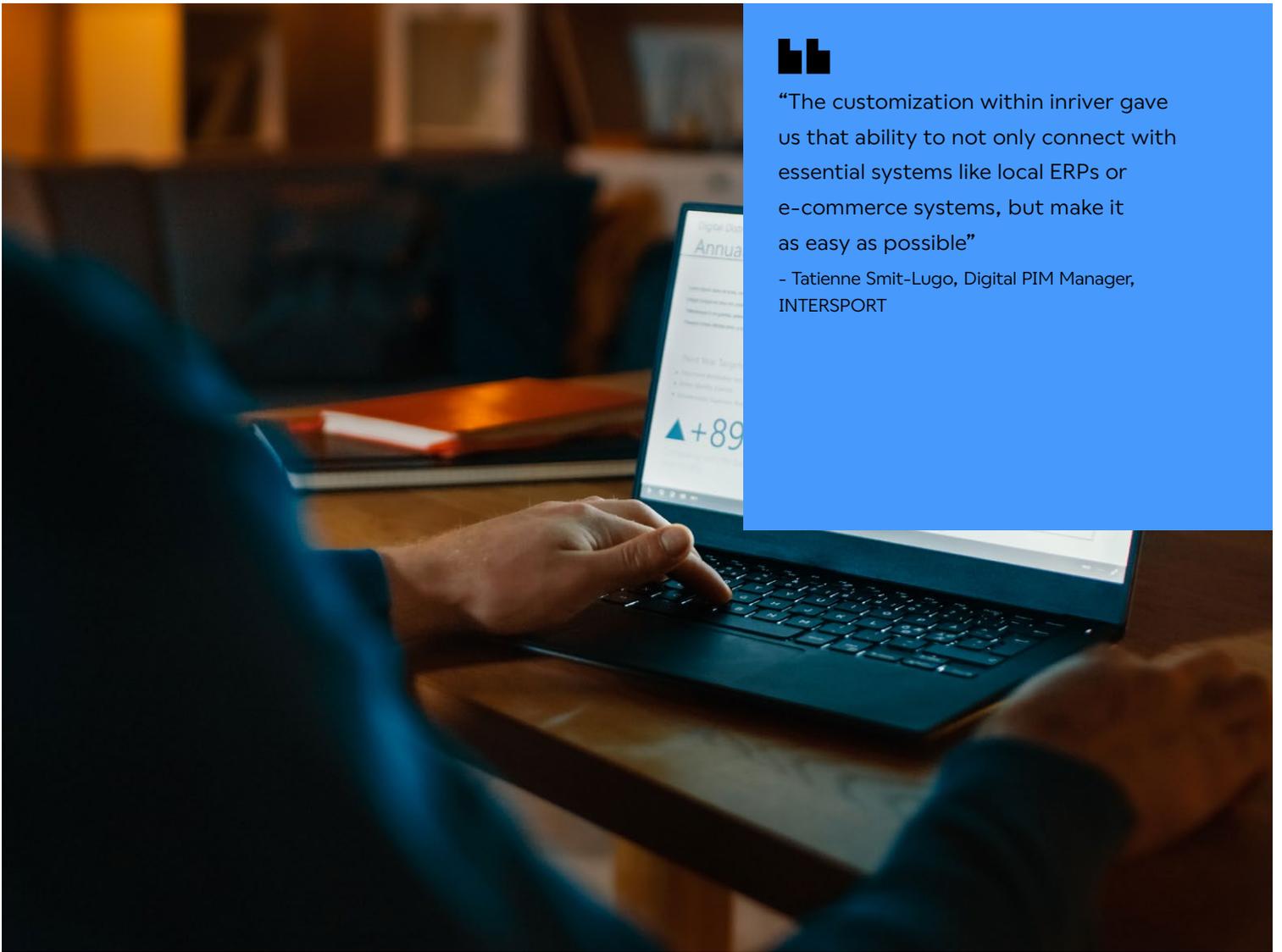
Without a PIM solution in place, instead of streamlining processes and production, unfortunately, staff may experience double (or triples) their workload. Why? Updating new channels means manually entering all product information in multiple places. These time-consuming, and often, duplicate practices are ripe for automation and can be a quick cultural win in your digital transformation journey.

With a PIM solution, you streamline the input and maintenance of all product data. Suddenly, you have a single point of the truth about product specifications, descriptions and attributes everyone in the organization can use. Everyone from product development, engineering, marketing, commerce, sales and support can tap

into the PIM repository to get the most current product information. And if the product information is used in other systems, it can be integrated to provide the automated, hands-off information flow you need.

In addition, with the workflow tools inherent in your PIM solution, you can ensure product information has been created, approved, and implemented without needing additional IT support. The functionality is easy to use and can be leveraged across an organization with role-based access to keep productivity high.

For many, digital transformation means breaking down silos between your organization and your supply chain partners. Being able to access your PIM solution remotely, ensures that your business keeps running even if the office is shuttered. With a PIM solution, you can easily increase product transparency within your extended enterprise and re-imagine new ways to work together – a hallmark of digital transformation.



“The customization within inriver gave us that ability to not only connect with essential systems like local ERPs or e-commerce systems, but make it as easy as possible”

- Tatienne Smit-Lugo, Digital PIM Manager, INTERSPORT

both an executive and IT priority

Up to this point, we’ve made a strong case for making a PIM solution a core part of your digital transformation strategy. It also needs to be a high priority for IT. By making the effort to integrate the PIM system with other solutions in your organization, it is easier for IT staff to manage.

To get your department over the implementation and integration set up, you can often augment your staff with your PIM provider’s professional

services organization to assist with this effort. And the good news is once these systems are fully integrated and connected, the information will flow from one system to another automatically. The beauty of the SaaS model means no downtime, no hardware upgrades, and continuous updates. Especially as teams work remote these days, maintaining software and systems needs to be done as quickly and easily as possible with remote access.

core IT PIM requirements



Cloud-based



Single-entry data management model fully accessible throughout the enterprise



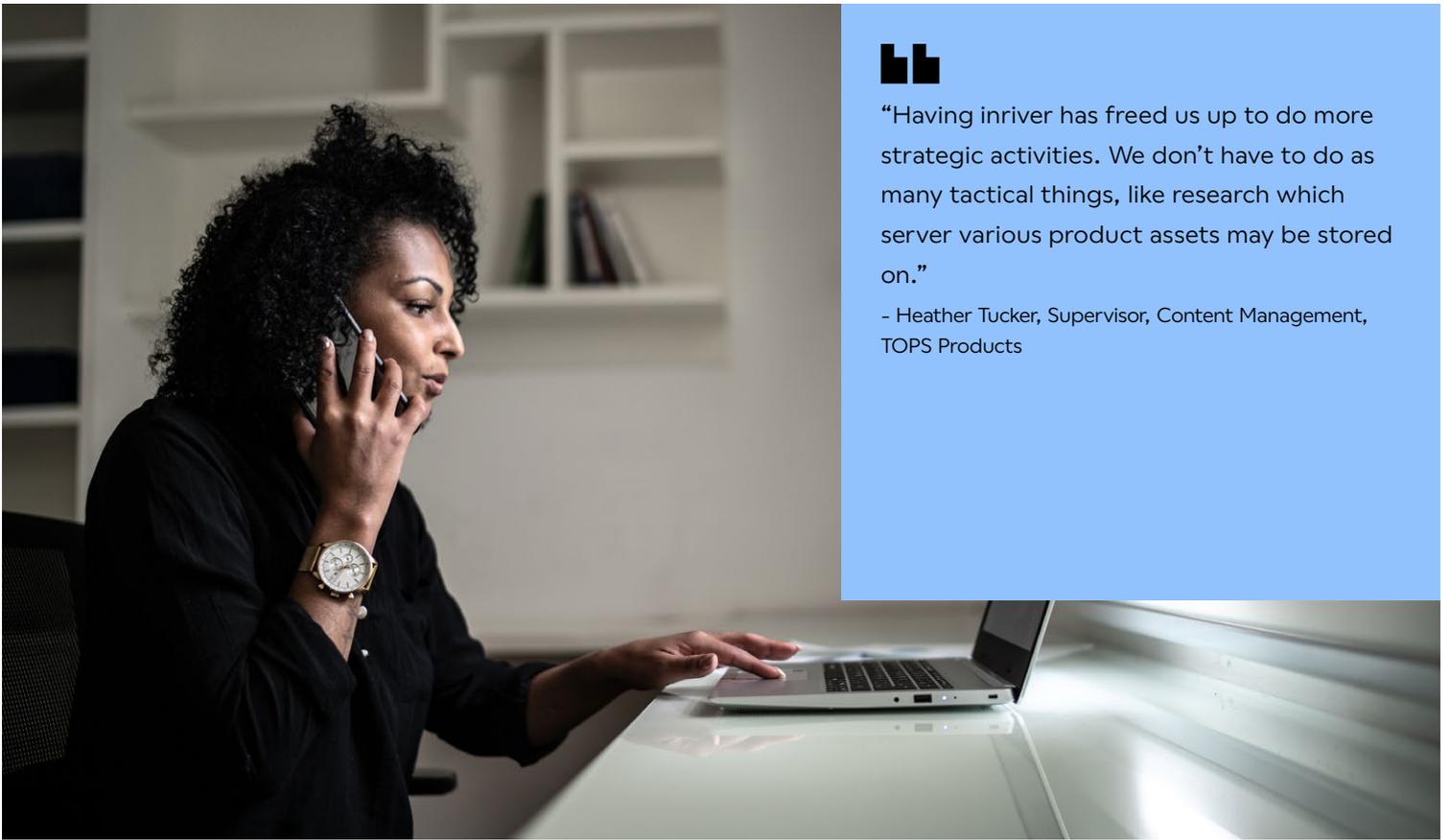
Comprehensive data visibility in both the PIM and other systems



Easy role-based administration to manage access and approvals



Easy integration with all other digital transformation technology, both foundational systems (ERP, Financials, e-commerce solutions) as well as the outwardly visible solutions (Call Center, Website Management Solutions).



“Having inriver has freed us up to do more strategic activities. We don’t have to do as many tactical things, like research which server various product assets may be stored on.”

- Heather Tucker, Supervisor, Content Management, TOPS Products

the make or buy decision

When you have determined a PIM solution implementation is indeed a core strategy for your digital transformation, the next decision is whether to build it in-house or buy an off-the-shelf solution from a PIM-specialized vendor. The case for a commercially available solution is strong:

- Even your most talented developers will likely not have extensive PIM development and implementation experience while a veteran PIM solution provider has the insight into the issues and challenges many companies have faced.
- Planning to build a PIM solution in-house means getting in line behind other development priorities which can lead to delays and deferrals.
- Once a PIM project is at the top of the list, there is a lengthy and

expensive process to determine user requirements and design the solution, something that can be avoided with an off-the-shelf PIM solution.

- You are at risk to lose momentum and intellectual capital if any of your key project staff leave the company.
- Utilizing a cloud-based software-as-a-service model means upgrades and feature expansion are seamless and automatic.
- Even if you decide to build the solution perfectly suited to your business needs, you may not fully anticipate the needs of the business in the future, while best-of-breed software companies are fully focused on both your short and long term requirements.



conclusion

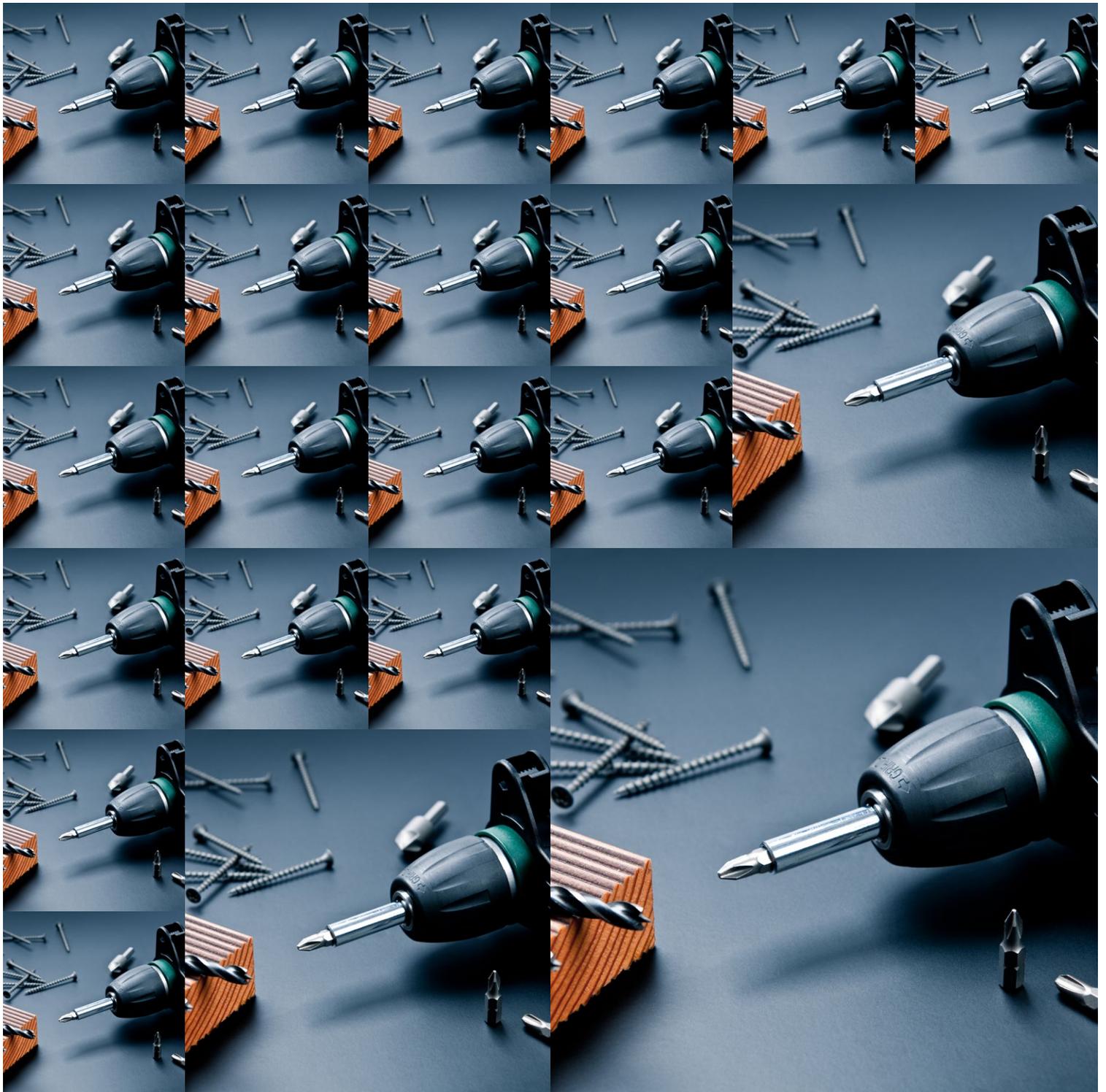
COVID-19 has made taking a digital-first approach a necessity and making a PIM solution high priority will accelerate your digital transformation journey. You will reap more benefits upfront and avoid the need to revisit product marketing processes and workflows later in your transformation process.

You can more rapidly capitalize on the content enrichment and workflow automation capabilities a PIM solution affords. Your marketing, sales and support teams will likely thank you because the most up-to-date and accurate product information will be in one place – no digging through emails, hard drives, spreadsheets, and database downloads.

Implementing a PIM solution will allow you to be a full participant in all the omnichannel opportunities. It may even open a new uncontested category for your company or one of your brands.

An early win for IT and the employees, implementing a PIM system will help them feel more efficient and effective at their jobs – a real transformation morale booster.

The kicker? Your customers will enjoy the increased transparency and highest levels of product data accuracy. And your ability to compete against the competition will increase as well.



Want to learn more how PIM can help drive digital transformation?

Give us 20 minutes and we'll give you an insightful PIM crash course to get started.

[tell me more](#)

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