

Case Study: Consumer Goods

Tidying up the “digital shelf” with centralized product information and images

A global consumer goods company quickly syndicates up-to-date product information to e-commerce partners and distributors.

Is your product information on e-commerce platforms up-to-date? It’s hard to be sure when you sell tens of thousands of products through hundreds of partners in dozens of countries.

Out-of-date product listings can be costly. Customers who receive a different product from what they ordered might return it or post negative reviews, depressing sales and damaging the brand. The e-commerce partner can impose fines and suspend the vendor from its platform if product dimensions or features differ from the description. And if the outdated description includes cartoon characters or other images for which the license has expired, the company may face more fines from the image owner.

At a glance

A consumer goods company operating in 40 countries needed assurance that e-commerce sites and distributors were publishing the latest product information and images—to increase sales, strengthen the brand and avoid fines.

Outcomes

Cognizant designed and implemented a centralized Product Information Management (PIM) and Digital Asset Management (DAM) system that:

- Accelerated time to market in digital channels by 60%.
- Reduced time spent creating product listings by 68%.
- Saved \$3 million annually in operational expense.

Scattered product information

Our client, a global consumer-goods company, wanted a way to quickly syndicate accurate product information to its 500 e-commerce partners and distributors—and to confirm that existing listings were up-to-date. The challenge? Product information was scattered across multiple systems: ERP master data systems like SAP R3, SAP EHS, SharePoint systems and even desktops. Attributes such as product titles, descriptions, dimensions, package counts and features were not consistent across countries. And the systems could not store product images, videos and documents, which were spread across still more systems.

The lack of a single source of truth for product information created cascading problems. New product listings had to wait till the marketing and brand teams hunted through multiple systems for the right information and images. Different descriptions of the same product led to inaccurate sales reports and forecasts. Auditing e-commerce sites for out-of-date information took 6-8 months, exposing the company to legal and compliance risks. The challenges would multiply as the company introduced more products in more countries through more channels and in more languages.

Syndication made easy

Now the company has an easier, more automated way to syndicate product data to retailers and other channels. We built a digital shelf solution that serves as a single source of truth for tens of thousands of products and hundreds of thousands of images for business segments operating in 40 countries.

The product information management (PIM) solution, hosted on Stibo Step, pulls in data from the company's existing SAP, packaging, pricing

and product hierarchy systems. The digital asset management (DAM) solution, based on MediaBeacon, serves as a central repository for the latest images, PDF files, packaging artwork and videos. We designed an intuitive interface that employees and partners can use to access product data and images from both systems in one place.

Today more than 3500 employees and agencies use the digital shelf solution. We worked in two-week sprints to roll it out across North America, Latin America, EMEA and Asia Pacific. Country teams can now customize the standard framework.

60% faster time to market

With a one-stop shop for current product information and images, the company now introduces new products on e-commerce sites 60% faster—generally in less than two weeks. Better product information reduces returns and has boosted the online conversion rate, increasing sales by an estimated 15-20%.

68% less effort for marketing and e-commerce teams

Teams no longer have to manually enter product names and descriptions for hundreds of e-commerce platforms. We wrote code that automatically generates search-engine-optimized (SEO) product descriptions for each platform. Staff now spend 68% less time maintaining e-commerce listings, freeing up \$3 million in employee time for higher-value marketing activities.

Faster audits, avoidance of fines

The digital shelf solution also helps the company avoid fines imposed by e-commerce sites for inaccurate product information, and by image licensors (like movie companies) for publishing

Our solution reduced the time needed to maintain product data for e-commerce sites by **68%**, equating to **\$3 million** in annual savings for the brand team.

images after the license has expired. Previously, a team of people eyeballed images on partner websites to compare them to the latest, looking for outdated images and missing listings.

We automated the audit process. Now the PIM system sends a feed with up-to-date product descriptions and images to the shelf-monitoring application, which compares those descriptions and images with the information it scrapes from

e-commerce sites. Accuracy scores for various sites appear on a dashboard, and low accuracy scores prompt brand teams to update inaccurate content. Automation reduced audit time from 6-8 months to just one month.

Managing increasing complexity

Our client's experiences reflect what we're seeing with other consumer goods clients around the world. They need a simpler way to manage a digital shelf grown unwieldy as a result of more products, attributes, channels, sales regions and languages. We can meet the need by building a solution combining a centralized PIM and DAM, rules and processes to maintain data quality and automation.

We are now exploring ways to further simplify digital shelf management with artificial intelligence, such as automatically adding a new product to the marketing taxonomy (product category, size, color and so on). Other plans include auto-generation of search-optimized product content for e-commerce websites, and identifying and correcting duplicate or inaccurate product information.

About Cognizant's Retail and Consumer Goods Practice

Cognizant's Retail and Consumer Goods practice partners with retail supermarkets, department stores, specialty premium retailers, and large mass-merchandise discounters and consumer goods companies in the grocery, general merchandise, apparel, home and office, and consumer electronics segments to help both embrace the future of shopping, transform the customer experience in-store and online, and build the capabilities needed to win in the digital world. We work with leading retailers and consumer goods companies around the world including 9 of the top 30 global retailers, 6 of the top 10 consumer goods companies, and are consistently ranked as a top provider in Consumer Goods Technology's annual Readers' Choice Awards. We leverage our deep domain and consulting expertise to provide supply chain, merchandising, store, e-commerce, trade promotions, sales effectiveness, marketing services and analytics solutions across the retail and consumer goods spectrum. Our experience includes social, mobile, analytics & cloud (SMAC Stack™) and making meaning from Code Halos™ – the information that surrounds people, organizations, processes and products – to create unprecedented levels of value for retailers and consumer goods companies.

About Cognizant Artificial Intelligence Practice

As part of Cognizant Digital Business, Cognizant's Artificial Intelligence Practice provides advanced data collection and management expertise, as well as artificial intelligence and analytics capabilities that help clients create highly-personalized digital experiences, products and services at every touchpoint of the customer journey. Our AI solutions glean insights from data to inform decision-making, improve operations efficiencies and reduce costs. We apply Evolutionary AI, Conversational AI and decision support solutions built on machine learning, deep learning and advanced analytics techniques to help our clients optimize their business/IT strategy, identify new growth areas and outperform the competition. To learn more, visit us at cognizant.com/ai.

About Cognizant

Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSB) is one of the world's leading professional services companies, transforming clients' business, operating and technology models for the digital era. Our unique industry-based, consultative approach helps clients envision, build and run more innovative and efficient businesses. Headquartered in the U.S., Cognizant is ranked 193 on the Fortune 500 and is consistently listed among the most admired companies in the world. Learn how Cognizant helps clients lead with digital at www.cognizant.com or follow us @Cognizant.

Cognizant

World Headquarters

500 Frank W. Burr Blvd.
Teaneck, NJ 07666 USA
Phone: +1 201 801 0233
Fax: +1 201 801 0243
Toll Free: +1 888 937 3277

European Headquarters

1 Kingdom Street
Paddington Central
London W2 6BD England
Phone: +44 (0) 20 7297 7600
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7121 0102

India Operations Headquarters

#5/535 Old Mahabalipuram Road
Okkiyam Pettai, Thoraipakkam
Chennai, 600 096 India
Phone: +91 (0) 44 4209 6000
Fax: +91 (0) 44 4209 6060