GLANSER

GUIDE · PIM · B2B

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PRODUCT INFORMATION

PIM in Practice

How to build the best customer experience with smart, efficient product information management — and why this is where real digitalization begins.

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B2B business moves online

An ever-larger share of the buying journey now takes place on the buyer's own terms — from identifying a problem to finding solutions, comparing alternatives, and choosing a supplier. Professional buyers increasingly expect to be able to make decisions, and place orders, directly online.

As buying behaviour shifts, the opportunity for B2B companies to conduct business digitally grows with it. The first contact with a new customer often still requires a personal relationship and a human close. But beyond that, there are significant opportunities for upselling, add-on products, and repeat purchases online. This is especially clear between manufacturers and distributors, and in the channel out to resellers, where the expectation of fast and smooth e-commerce is often already a given.

The B2B buying journey differs from consumer purchasing. Where consumer sales often focus on inspiring a purchase, B2B buyers have higher demands for **qualifying** their decisions. With broad ranges, many variants, customisations, spare parts, and accessories, the buyer's challenge is to confidently select the right option based on their own need.

> A well-structured product portfolio, presented clearly and accessibly, is essential for anyone who wants to succeed digitally in a B2B context.

This guide is written from a B2B perspective, where complexity and requirements are typically greatest. But the principles apply equally to B2C — consistent and up-to-date product data is just as critical regardless of who the buyer is.

02

The challenge of a complex product range

A central challenge for every B2B company going online is offering a digital experience that lives up to what customers and partners are used to from personal dialogue with sales representatives. Being inspiring isn't enough. The site also has to present an often complex range in a clear, easy-to-navigate way.

The offering often consists of many products — across an even larger number of variants and customisations. Add to that complementary add-on products, services, and often an extensive spare parts range. A broad portfolio requires a considerable amount of information to describe each product's function, characteristics, and role in the range.

THE KEY SUCCESS FACTOR:

Helping every visitor find the right product when navigating the offering. Without a well-structured and easy-to-navigate presentation, there is a real risk that the visitor will leave — or that the visit will end with a call to customer support.

> Without a well-structured and easy-to-navigate offering, visitors are likely to leave before they find what they need.

03

What is PIM?

Product Information Management

PIM is about methodically structuring, presenting, and visualising a company's products — in the online store and in every other channel. It also means creating relationships between products that belong together, managing languages and local variations, and building structures that make both navigation and search straightforward.

DEFINITION

The goal of PIM is to create a **dynamic product catalogue** that makes it easy to present the full range in an informative and engaging way — and to ensure that information is **consistent regardless of channel**. It also means giving the internal organisation the support it needs to work efficiently with products and offerings.

In a B2B company, master data is often held centrally in an ERP or PLM system. Connecting channels to the business system is therefore an important step. But equally important is giving the product and marketing teams the tools to complement administrative data with sales- and market-oriented information in text, images, and video. When everything is managed in one central place, duplication of effort decreases while quality improves — a logic that applies as strongly in B2C as in B2B.

ERP = Enterprise Resource Planning · PLM = Product Lifecycle Management

04

The systems are rarely the problem

Many companies want to improve their website, portals, or digital customer experience. The ambition is high — but the outcome is often limited by something more fundamental than the choice of technology or platform: the availability of correct, consolidated, and usable product information.

> In practice, it is rarely the systems that are the problem. It is the information.

When product information is not consolidated and governed, the capability of the platform underneath matters less. The gaps carry over into every new channel, every new integration, and every new customer view. This guide therefore addresses the foundation as much as the tools built on top of it — because that is where the real difference is made.

05

When ERP data isn't enough

And it becomes unclear where information belongs

For most organisations, the ERP system is the natural starting point for master data. Article numbers, descriptions, sometimes pricing logic and business rules are all there. But ERP is rarely built for what determines the customer experience today: images, videos, certificates, safety data sheets, guides, texts, and variations by market or customer segment. The question is where these belong — and who is responsible for them.

ERP has a clear core. Everything else is scattered — without a clear home or owner.

When it isn't clear, a vacuum forms. Marketing stores material locally, product specialists keep their own folders, sales downloads versions that quickly become outdated. Updates are made, but never reach all the way out.

> The organisation thinks it is working in a data-driven way. In practice, it is still dependent on individuals.

06

The hidden consequences

When the information doesn't hold together

In our conversations with companies across industries, the same patterns recur:

Different answers to the same question.

Sales and inside sales give different responses depending on who the customer speaks to.

Updates that never reach their destination.

Product specialists update information that never makes it to the website, the portal, or the quote material on which contracts are signed.

Disputed documentation.

Large customers challenge documentation that doesn't match the product delivered.

Regulatory risk.

Requirements become difficult to meet because the wrong version of the information is in use.

This is rarely the result of a lack of competence — quite the opposite, organisations often hold enormous knowledge. The problem is that the information is not structured, consolidated, or available where it is needed.

07

Product catalogue vs PIM

A product catalogue is fundamentally a database where product information is stored in a structured way. A PIM system takes information management a step further — a more dynamic database with flexible information models that can be easily adapted to the organisation's unique needs.

Traditional product catalogue:

- Fixed and static structure.
- Stores information
- Limited customisation
- Few built-in workflows.

PIM system:

- Dynamic, flexible data model
- Support for structuring, enriching, and presenting.
- Built-in workflows and ownership
- Scales with range and channels.

> A qualified PIM system also supports the workflows required to build, enrich, and present products attractively.

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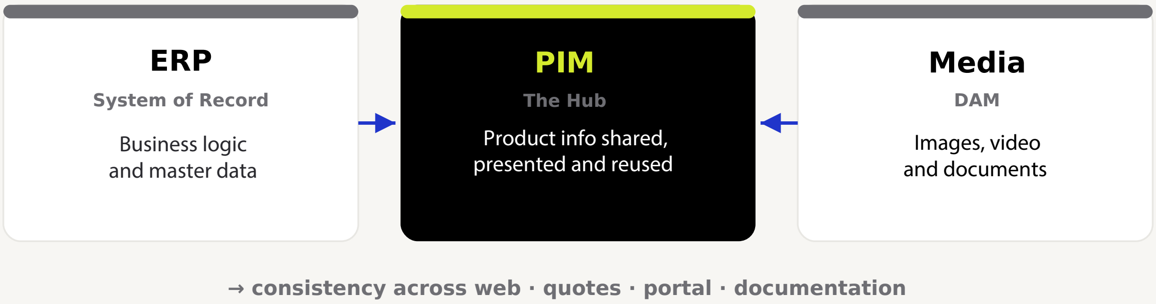
Single source of truth — but for what, exactly?

A common misconception is that "single source of truth" means one single system for all data. In practice, it means that each type of information should have a clear primary source.



Each type of information has a governing primary source. PIM becomes the hub that connects them.

The point is not to move everything — but to clarify where each piece of information belongs and which source is authoritative. Only then can consistency be achieved across website, quotes, portals, and documentation.

09

Different types of B2B sales

Business-to-business transactions take many forms. The expectation of complete, structured, and relevant product information is equally important in all of them.

Consuming buyers:

companies that purchase products and solutions to support their own operations — to develop or improve their production, office, or development environment. The buyer is the end user of what is purchased.

Reselling buyers:

companies that purchase products they in turn sell on to the next level — often as part of a broader offering, together with products from other suppliers. The information is expected to align with what other suppliers provide.

COMMON DENOMINATOR

In both cases, interest in e-commerce and digital business opportunities is growing. And in both cases — just as in B2C — the quality of product information determines whether the buyer can make a confident decision.in both cases, interest in e-commerce and digital business opportunities is growing. And in both cases — just as in B2C — the quality of product information determines whether the buyer can make a confident decision.

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The preparation phase

Where the real work begins

Before discussing technology, the organisation needs to align on some fundamental questions. This is often where the greatest value is created.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INFORMATION:

- What product information do we need to support the business and our customers?
- What information do we have today — and where does it live?
- What information is missing, or of insufficient quality?
- What data sources are actually being used in practice, consciously or otherwise?

Mapping this out produces the real picture of the current state — not the one in the org chart, but the one that drives day-to-day work. That is the only realistic starting point for a roadmap.

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Roles and responsibilities

Equally important as the information itself is ownership. Who owns the information long-term? Who creates and updates it? Who reviews and ensures quality?

01 Product Owner

Owns the product and its overall commercial scope.

02 Information Owner

Owns the product and its overall commercial scope.

03 Editor

Creates and updates content on an ongoing basis.

04 Product Expert

Contributes deep technical knowledge about the product.

05 Data Responsible

Ensures structure, format, and data integrity.

06 PIM Manager

Keeps the whole together so that everything looks consistent and standards are maintained.

These roles are not always formally defined, but they already exist in the organisation. Regardless of size, there is always value in appointing a PIM Manager who maintains the overall standard.

> Clarifying who owns the information is often a bigger breakthrough than choosing the system.

The PIM process — four steps

Four steps that structure and streamline the work

Those who want to streamline their PIM work with the support of a documented process should start from one ground rule: the process must be built on the existing business. The ideal PIM process therefore looks different for every company. Most consist of four distinct parts — each an important step in enriching and presenting the offering in the best possible way.

STEP 1

Supply

Products enter the system with master data.

STEP 2

Enrich

Products are dressed with text, images, and video.

STEP 3

Plan

Relationships and structures are created and maintained.

STEP 4

Publish

The right information reaches the right channels.

OUR EXPERIENCE

A clear process makes it possible to work in parallel rather than sequentially — and to distribute, coordinate, and follow up on tasks on an ongoing basis. That is where speed and quality improve simultaneously.

1 Supply | 2 Enrich | 3 Plan | 4 Publish

01 Supply

Products enter the system

The first step is often managed by the company's purchasing department. Purchasing is responsible for which products to bring in and for entering them into the ERP system. Once products have been added with basic facts — name, article number, and often price — they can be transferred to the PIM system.

KEY SUCCESS FACTOR

A well-functioning integration between the business system and the channels is essential for the flow to run as smoothly as possible. This is where the predictability of the entire process is established.

02 Enrich

Products are dressed with text, images, and video

For many B2B companies, the enrichment step is becoming an increasingly important part of the process. Products are equipped with sales and marketing information: engaging and explanatory texts, images, and video content.

Responsibility is often shared between product management and marketing, and sometimes involves other team members or external agencies. The key is to let the process describe all the activities involved in enrichment — and then clarify who is responsible for what. This becomes easier when the PIM tool has built-in workflow support, with the ability to delegate, coordinate, and follow up.

MULTIPLE MARKETS

Localisation is an important part — adapting to local certifications, languages, currencies, and terms. To keep translation work running smoothly, PIM typically offers support for exporting data, which can be sent to external translators without giving them access to the business-critical platform.

1 Supply | 2 Enrich | **3 Plan** | 4 Publish

03 Plan

Create and maintain product structures

The goal of the third step is to create relationships between products and structures for how the full range will be presented. This can mean defining which categories a product belongs to, which markets it will be available in, and which models or variants it comes in.

> For range planning and structure work to flow, it is important to be able to manage planning down to individual product variant level.

This is where the range gains its logic — the logic that later makes it possible to filter, search, and navigate correctly across all channels.

1 Supply | 2 Enrich | 3 Plan | **4 Publish**

04 Publish

The right information in the right channels

In the final step, you ensure that the right information is published in the right channel. Smart publishing means showing different information to different audiences, with the right language support, and drawing on the relationships already defined — for example to suggest related products or accessories.

The more relevant products and channels there are, the more complex the puzzle becomes. Here there are significant advantages to central management of all product information.

- E-commerce / web
- Portals
- Resellers
- Marketplaces
- Social media
- Printed catalogue
- Price comparison
- Google Shopping
- Industry databases

A single source ensures correct and consistent information — optimised for each channel.

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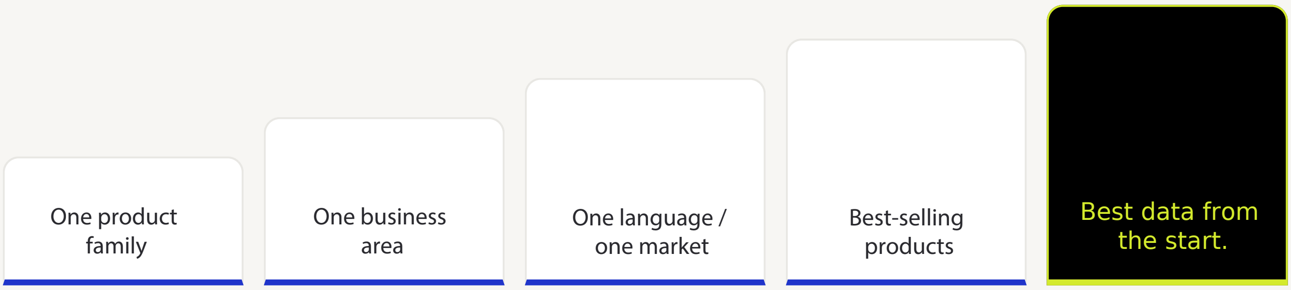
Starting in the right order

Rather than trying to do everything at once

Companies that succeed with PIM rarely start with the full range. They start where the business value is clearest — and grow from there.



You define which fields are mandatory, which are optional, and which can be built out over time. The information is then connected to real use — on the website, in quotes, or in portals.

> It is only when the information is being used that quality truly begins to improve.

Five benefits of centralised product information

01 Less duplication of effort

With all information in one place, internal work becomes simpler and the risk of duplication is minimised. The catalogue becomes a guarantee that customers encounter consistent and correct information — regardless of channel.

02 Control over the enrichment flow

A qualified PIM supports the often complex enrichment work and makes it possible to work in parallel rather than sequentially — more products with better information in less time.

03 Better customer experience

In-depth presentations in text, images, and video lay the foundation for digital experiences where visitors are both guided and inspired toward a purchase.

04 Easier to find the right product

A structured presentation across categories and brands makes it easier to search, filter, and navigate — which increases the chance of conversion and more business.

05 Fewer returns and less pressure on support

Correct and relevant information helps customers choose correctly on their own — which produces more satisfied customers, less load on customer service, and fewer costly returns.

More effects of PIM

Media, pricing, and sustainability

01 **Simpler media management with flexible flows.**

A modern PIM removes much of the manual update work across different channels. Automated flows make management smoother, and when all information is drawn from a single source, the risk of a slow or inconsistent site is reduced.

02 **Integrated pricing management.**

Information doesn't need to be retrieved from other systems in real time. PIM supports variants, customer-specific prices, tiered prices, and bundle pricing — particularly relevant for B2B — and can be extended with special pricing features.

03 **Sustainability and increasing requirements.**

Customers are becoming increasingly aware of product information — raw materials, origin, and what they are willing to pay for. PIM makes it easier to meet the need for detailed information and to keep it correct and accessible in real time.

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PIM as an enabler

Not an isolated system

Once the structure is in place, the conditions for all further digitalisation change:

- New channels become easier to launch.
- Self-service becomes possible.
- Customer-specific views can be built without custom solutions.
- Integrations become more stable — they work against a clear information model.

HERE MANY REALIZE THAT

PIM is not a project.
It is a foundation.

Our guide and workshop

A structured start without over-investment

Glanser's PIM guide and accompanying workshop are designed for exactly this phase. The focus is not on tools or implementation, but on creating shared understanding, structure, and a realistic roadmap.

WHAT WE DO TOGETHER:

- 01 Identify the relevant information
- 02 Clarify responsibilities and roles
- 03 Map data sources
- 04 Define a scoped next step

The result is a decision basis that can be used regardless of how or when you choose to proceed. Consolidating product information can feel like a large internal undertaking to get around to sometime. Our experience is that it is in fact the step that determines whether the rest of your digitalisation becomes manageable, predictable, and scalable.

> When the information is in place,
> much else falls into place too.

About GLANSER & next steps

This publication has been produced by Glanser — a digital product company that helps companies and company groups build, evolve, and manage digital solutions in a more structured and predictable way.

Glanser was founded by people with long experience from established agency and consulting environments, with the ambition of making digital development simpler, clearer, and more sustainable over time. Our work is grounded in pre-built, proven functions and clear ownership — rather than projects with open scope. This guide builds on practical experience from working with product information, digital platforms, and integrations in organisations with complex businesses, many products, and high demands for correct and accessible information.

NÄSTA STEG

Want to see how this applies to your company?

Without launching a large project. We're happy to explain how, and walk through the approach in a short conversation.

Book a conversation →

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