

Guide to Switching PIM System Providers

What you should be looking for
and the questions you need to ask



The right Product Information Management (PIM) system is no longer simply a tool for managing product information. It's a strategic asset that can significantly impact your business's ability to grow, adapt and compete in the competitive world of Digital Commerce.

PIM system technology has been around for many years – whether yours is a market-leading PIM system that has historically served you well, a PIM system you've outgrown, or you're just starting on your Digital Commerce journey, there have been technological advancements in recent years which may lead you to question whether a review would be timely.

It's not a decision to take lightly, as there are many factors which need to be taken into account.

Wherever you are in your journey your PIM system needs to keep pace with the demands of business growth, market adaptation and complex supply chain management, integration with existing systems or price inflexibility.

This eBook has been designed to help you ask the right questions, including killer questions to get the answers you need when exploring what alternative providers offer and whether it has legacy or next-generation benefits.



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1. Evolving Business Needs

As businesses grow and markets evolve, the demands on PIM systems become increasingly complex and varied.

It's crucial to undertake regular reviews to determine whether your current PIM system is still fit for purpose or if it's time to seek a more adaptable and scalable solution.

1.1 Growth and Expansion

Business growth often translates to a larger product inventory, more diverse product ranges, and an increased need for detailed and varied product information. A scalable PIM solution is vital in such scenarios.

Scalability means more than just handling a larger volume of data; it also involves the ability to efficiently manage and disseminate this information across various channels and platforms as well as what it's going to cost.

Answers you may need:

"Can the PIM system handle an increased volume of products and information without a decline in performance?"

"Does it allow for easy integration with new sales channels and e-commerce platforms?"

"How well can it manage growing demands without significantly increasing operational costs?"

1.2 Market Adaptation

Adapting to new markets often requires tailoring product information to meet local needs, languages, and cultural nuances.

In today's global marketplace, a PIM system must be agile and flexible enough to cater to diverse consumer trends and preferences.



Answers you may need:

“Does the PIM satisfactorily handle multilingual data and localisation?”

“Can I quickly update product information to reflect changing market trends and customer behaviours?”

“How do I easily customise information for different regions, including variations in specifications, pricing, and marketing materials?”

1.3 Complex Supply Chains

Modern supply chains are often global and multifaceted, necessitating a PIM system capable of integrating complex supply chain data efficiently.

This integration is crucial for ensuring accurate, real-time product information across all touchpoints.

Answers you may need:

“Does PIM functionality allow the integration of multiple suppliers and logistics platforms with a unified view of the supply chain?”

“How effectively can the system update and manage information across different stages of the supply chain from manufacturing to distribution? ”

“How easily does the PIM handle changes in supply chain dynamics, such as adding new suppliers or adapting to logistical changes?”

2. Integration Capabilities

The ability of a PIM system to seamlessly integrate with other business systems is critical for a holistic approach to data management.



Integration is vital for maintaining data integrity and providing a unified customer experience.

Answers you may need:

“Can the PIM system handle an increased volume of products and information without a decline in performance?”

“Does it allow for easy integration with new sales channels and e-commerce platforms?”

“How well can it manage growing demands without significantly increasing operational costs?”

3. Cost, Efficiency and Value

The long-term cost benefits of modern PIM solutions often extend beyond the initial investment in the software.

Analysing the long-term cost benefits, scalability, maintenance requirements, and the potential reduction in operational inefficiencies becomes

more critical as you evaluate these topics over the lifetime of a product.

On the subject of cost, many complex pricing models exist and businesses are starting to seek “all-in” pricing on a “pay-as-you-go basis” rather than modular pricing structured on features and add-ins which can add up over time.

Answers you may need:

“Does the PIM system use automation that translates into long-term resource costs?”

“Is the PIM system supporting a reduction of possible errors and improved data accuracy that offers me fewer returns, and more sales and maintains my Brand reputation?”

“Am I paying a fair price for what I’m getting?”



4. Scalability and Maintenance

Scalability and maintenance of a PIM system are directly tied to decisions you make around cost but raises its own set of questions.

Answers you may need:

"Is the PIM system scalable enough to support more complex data needs as the business grows without the need for significant additional investment?"

"Is the PIM system growing with my business and keeping pace without costly upgrades and system changes?"

"Does the system rely on resources from my IT Team to manage and maintain?"

5. Operational Efficiency

A more accurate, reliable and efficient PIM system can lead to significant savings by reducing operational inefficiencies.

Answers you may need:

"How does the PIM system streamline data management processes to ensure time-saving and cost-effective operations?"

"How efficient is it, especially when handling large volumes of product information?"



6. User Experience and Productivity

A PIM system's user interface design, ease of training and adoption, and ability to improve data accuracy and efficiency are pivotal elements that can significantly influence the overall effectiveness of your product information management.

6.1 User Interface Design

The design of the user interface (UI) in a PIM system plays a vital role in determining how efficiently users can perform their tasks.

Answers you may need:

"Will users be able to navigate the system intuitively, using a well-designed UI, saving time spent on finding features or information?"

"What customisation options are available that allow users to tailor to their workflows and preferences?"

"Does the UI information present in a clear, concise and visually appealing way which reduces cognitive load and will lead to quicker and more accurate data processing?"

6.2 Training and Adoption

The ease with which users can learn and adopt a new PIM system is crucial in ensuring a smooth transition and continued productivity.

User-friendly PIM systems with intuitive interfaces require less time to learn.

This means employees can get up to speed quickly, minimising downtime during the transition period.

Answers you may need:

"What measures are in place to reduce the amount of training time?"

"What's available in terms of training materials to facilitate the adoption process and ensure new users will get up to speed quickly?"



6.3 Accuracy and Efficiency

A key advantage of a high-quality PIM system is its ability to improve the accuracy and efficiency of product information management.

Answers you may need:

“Can the PIM system efficiently handle real-time data updates and synchronisation, ensuring that customers always have access to the most current and accurate product information?”

“How does the PIM system's automation capabilities contribute to reducing manual errors in product information management, thereby enhancing overall operational efficiency and data quality?”

7. AI and Machine Learning

Advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are transforming the capabilities of PIM systems.

Understanding these technological trends is crucial when considering a switch to a new PIM provider.

This automation can offer advanced data accuracy and integrity which is critical in a landscape where customers rely heavily on detailed product information to make purchasing decisions.

Answers you may need:

“Does the PIM system offer predictive analytics so I'm easily able to anticipate market demands, adjust inventory levels and tailor marketing strategies?”

“Can the PIM help in creating personalised product recommendations for customers by analysing browsing patterns and offering alternatives?”



8. Data Security and Compliance

Modern PIM systems come equipped with various security features designed to protect sensitive product information, encryption is one.

A PIM system that offers robust security measures, ensures regulatory compliance and effectively manages data-related risks not only protects businesses from potential threats but also builds trust with customers and partners.

As data security and compliance become increasingly crucial in the business landscape, choosing a PIM provider that prioritises these aspects is a wise strategic move.

8.1 Security Features

Evaluating the security features, compliance capabilities, and risk management strategies of

potential PIM systems is essential to protect your business and customer data effectively.

Answers you may need:

“What advanced encryption technologies are used to secure data both at rest and in transit, ensuring that sensitive information is protected from unauthorised access?”

“Does the PIM system offer granular access controls, allowing administrators to define user roles and permissions, ensuring that employees only have access to the data necessary for their role?”

“Are there regular updates and patches to the system, addressing any newly discovered vulnerabilities and ensuring the system stays protected against evolving cyber threats?”

“Does the PIM system keep detailed audit trails of user activities within it to help with tracking changes, identifying unusual activities and investigating potential security incidents?”



8.2 Compliance and Regulations

Compliance with data protection and privacy regulations is a critical aspect of PIM system selection.

Answers you may need:

“When operating globally, does the PIM system comply with international data protection regulations like GDPR, CCPA, and others?”

“Does the system have protocols in place for the ethical processing and storage of data, in line with regulatory requirements?”

“Is the PIM system capable of providing the necessary documentation and reporting tools to assist the business in proving compliance during audits?”

8.3 Risk Management

The ability of a PIM system to mitigate data-related risks is an essential factor in its selection.

Answers you may need:

“Are robust backup and recovery features in place to ensure that in the event of a system failure or data loss incident, product information can be quickly restored, minimising downtime and potential revenue loss?”

“Are regular system vulnerability assessments available to identify and address security risks before they can be exploited?”

“Does the PIM system provider offer security training for users, including awareness programs, helping to reduce risks associated with human error or insider threats?”



Summary:

In the context of assessing PIM system providers, whether they're an incumbent or you're seeking a new solution, it's essential to consider not just the functional capabilities of the new system but also how it will impact the daily work of those who use it.

A PIM system with a well-designed user interface, ease of training and adoption, and features that enhance data accuracy and efficiency can lead to significant gains in productivity and overall user satisfaction.

These factors ultimately contribute to the success of your product information management strategy and should be key considerations in your decision-making process.

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