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WHITEPAPER

A Guide to **PIM Implementation**

What you need to know before you implement a PIM system

Table of Contents

- **Executive Summary** 03
- **The Growing Importance of PIM** 04
- **Challenges in PIM Implementation** 05
- **Step-by-Step Implementation Guide**
  - **Prepare:** Assess Readiness and Set a Vision 06
  - **Plan:** Define Scope, Architecture & Governance 08
  - **Execute:** Configure, Integrate & Deploy 10
  - **Support & Optimize:** Measurement and Continuous Improvement 11
- **Customer Success Story** 12
- **Conclusion** 13
- **Get Expert Guidance for Your PIM Journey** 13
- **About Author** 14

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Executive Summary

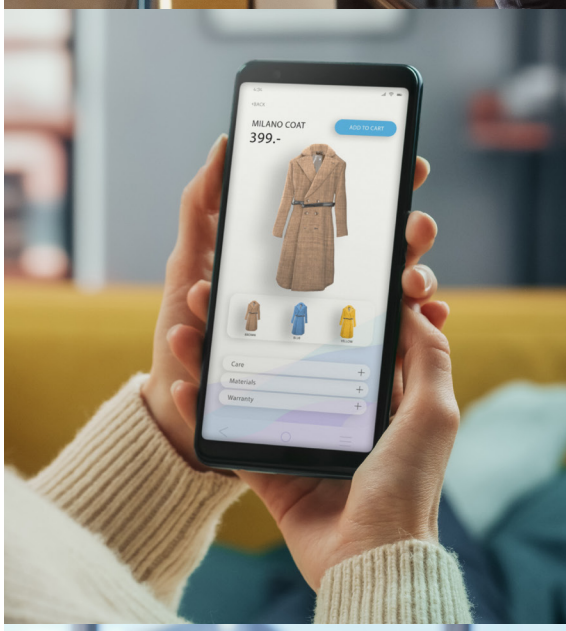
Product Information Management (PIM) is now a foundation of modern digital commerce.

It plays a crucial role in product data quality management, operational efficiency, faster time-to-market, and enhancing customer experience. The scope of PIM projects has expanded over the years, driven by growing user adoption and increasing demands for data governance and regulatory compliance.

But implementing modern PIM is not a “plug and play approach”; it demands guided planning, robust and flexible architecture, and cross-team collaboration.

Organizations that implement PIM with a clear vision generally get early advantages, higher user adoption, and an overall improved experience.

This guide articulates the complete PIM implementation journey for mid-sized businesses and large enterprises.



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The Growing Importance of PIM

In the early 2000s, organizations primarily relied on single-purpose PIM systems to manage large product catalogs, ensuring product data consistency for print catalogs and basic eCommerce needs. Today, organizations need more than that to succeed in a rapidly evolving digital commerce world.

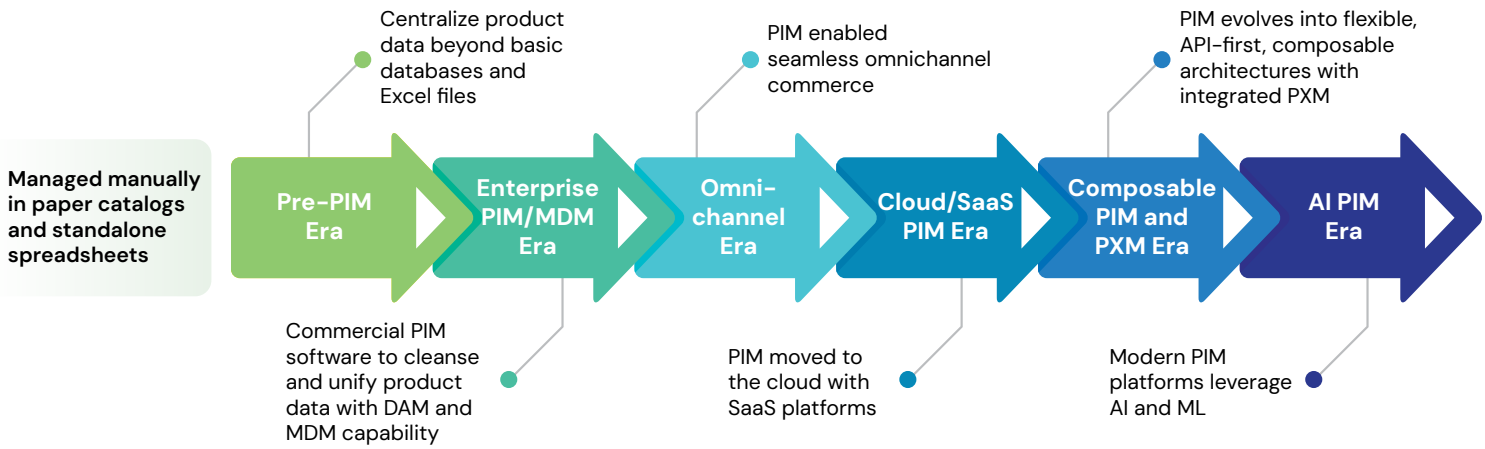
Over the last few years, PIM systems have become increasingly flexible and powerful, especially with the addition of composable and AI capabilities. They are now strategic enablers for:

- Consolidating and managing diverse product information
- Improving omnichannel agility for global commerce
- Automating processes for higher efficiency
- Improving data stewardship and governance
- Driving personalized customer experiences
- Ensuring regulatory compliance
- Supporting complex product ecosystems

Modern PIM platforms are mature enough to handle any product type, regardless of size, and are no longer confined to structured product attributes.

Their flexible, API-first and composable architecture empowers teams to deliver real-time, enriched, and consistent product information across different customer touchpoints.

Now, leveraging Generative AI (GenAI), organizations can accelerate dynamic product content creation, enrich existing product data, fill in missing data for product experience management (PXM), and optimize digital shelf performance.



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Challenges in PIM Implementation

While enterprises recognize the need for PIM, getting the optimal performance from the system still remains a big challenge. Based on our years of experience with PIM implementation, we have observed that poor PIM implementation remains a top barrier to digital commerce success.

Problems occur when data consistency and multichannel experiences are not handled as per the laid-out strategy, causing operational inefficiencies and costing businesses revenue and growth. Key reasons for not being able to implement PIM successfully are:

Selection Remorse
Choosing a PIM solution that fails to align with intended business goals, technical architecture, or operational workflows.

Scalability Complexity
Struggling to scale the platform, leading to performance degradation and business continuity disruptions.

Cultural Challenges
Overlooking organizational cultural aspects can result in low user adoption and resistance.

Underutilized AI Capabilities
Failing to utilize modern AI features for automated product content generation, enrichment, and product experience optimization.

Trust/Credibility
Perception of the product data reliability and security.

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Step-by-Step PIM Implementation

PIM implementation is more about addressing business-side challenges than focusing on the technology solution. Therefore, the foundational layer before PIM deployment must be robust enough to ensure the stability and success of the entire framework.

The PIM implementation process can be divided into four primary stages: **Prepare**, **Plan**, **Execute**, and **Optimize**. Here we blend each stage with strategic advice and tactical actions.

01 **Prepare**: Assess Readiness and Set Scope

Assessment of the current systems, data readiness, and achieving organization-wide alignment is one of the most important pillars for setting realistic expectations from the new system. This stage involves assessing the gaps in the "current state" and aligning stakeholders on the project's objectives- clarifying what you want to achieve with the system (you're going to implement) and how it should function internally and externally. Key activities include:

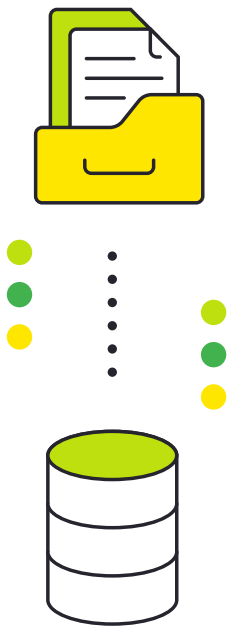
Stakeholder Alignment

Conduct discovery workshops to gather inputs, delve into current pain points, data sources, key users, and the overall system objectives. For example, clarify:

What business problems are you solving?
Like inconsistent product data, slow time-to-market, or channel inefficiencies.

Who are the key users?
Marketing and sales team, product management, e-commerce, merchandising, IT, legal/compliance, finance, and even suppliers or channel partners.

What KPIs will define project success?
Improved data quality, enhanced operational efficiency, faster time-to-market, or higher conversion rates.



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Document 'AS IS' Workflow vs. 'TO BE' Workflow

Map and document the process of how product information currently moves through the organization in the current system versus how you want it to be in the new system.

What are the gaps in the current data mapping?
Data silos, manual data mapping, data sharing inefficiencies, or hindered innovation.

What improvements do you want to see in the workflow?
Enrich product data, implement data governance and data stewardship, standardize formats, and automate processes.

Who publishes or enriches the product data?
Internal teams, merchandisers, or external agencies.

Set Scope During the Planning Phase

Analyze the preliminary audit of the current system and define the project scope to be implemented, clearly outlining its boundaries, objectives, constraints, and deliverables.

What are the must-have features vs. nice-to-have?
Data inconsistencies, identifying duplicates, enriching product data (its descriptions and attributes), automating workflows, and more.

What product data should you know early?
In the early stage of implementation, you must know the complete product data checklist covering different SKUs (product codes & variants), product taxonomies, core attributes, metadata, and product hierarchy & structure.

How to handle regulatory, compliance, or security challenges of the system?
Comply with the applicable laws, establish regulatory and compliance policy, and meet industry standards. Apply security protocols to ensure data security and protection against threats.

Tips:

Document everything in the current system, such as any manual processes or shortcuts teams use. We have noted that this documentation allows the involved teams to lead vendor conversations rather than follow them blindly. You'll know which capabilities are must-haves versus nice-to-haves.

Before talking to vendors, compile a list of key use cases (e.g. omnichannel catalog syndication, advanced search/filtering, analytics). Include technical requirements (languages, data volume, integrations). This ensures your team can confidently lead the vendor evaluation, rather than letting each vendor dictate the conversation.

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02 **Plan**: Define Solution, Architecture & Governance

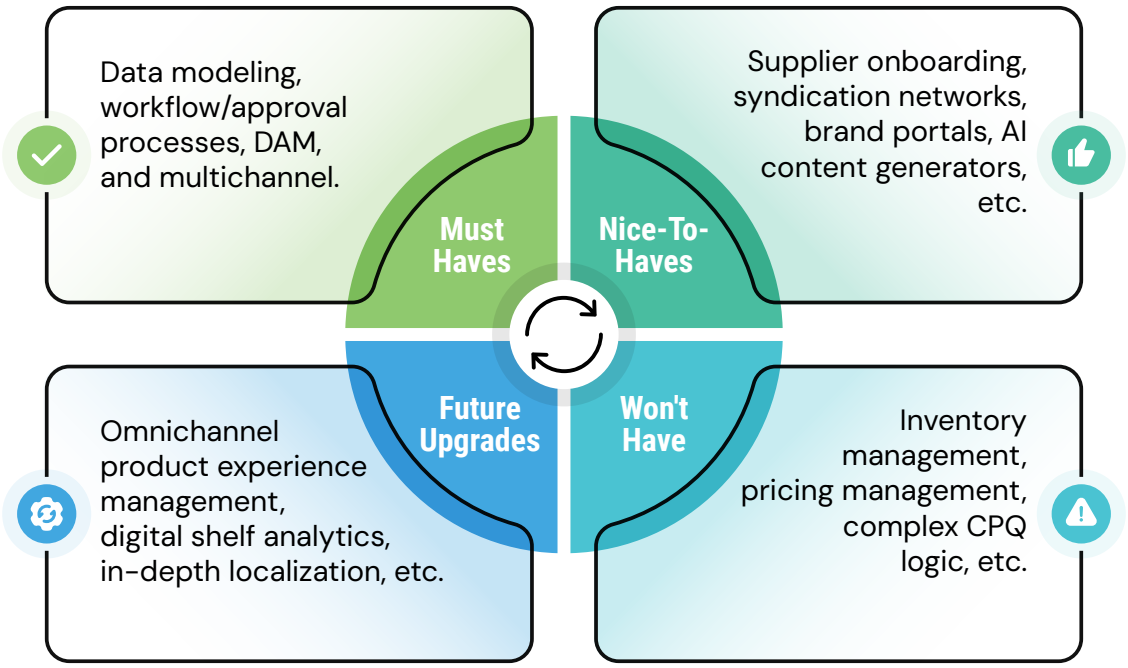
With clarity on the business objectives and the current state, the next phase is to translate requirements into a concrete project plan and system design. This includes scoping data and features, choosing an adaptable solution architecture, and securing stakeholder buy-in.

Define Scope and Requirements

This is a critical step to ensure the solution is deployed on time, within budget, and aligned with your business goals.

- **How many SKUs and product attribute will be managed?**
- **Are you covering one product line or multiple brands?**
- **What are functional and non-functional requirements?**
- **Will you support multiple languages, currencies, or regions?**
- **Do you need to manage assets (images, videos, manuals) alongside text data?**
- **List all content types (text, specs, media) and their volume.**
- **What are constraints, assumptions, or any regulatory risks?**

Prioritize features in a requirements matrix by categorizing them as “must-haves”, "nice-to-haves", "won't haves", and “future enhancements” in your phased PIM implementation plan. Below is an example of a feature matrix:



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Decide on System Architecture

A system architecture is the backbone of the whole project. It is actually the driving force as it reveals how the system is designed, implemented and maintained. Thus, you must carefully evaluate technical options during this phase. Here are the key considerations:

Open-Source vs. Commercial

Both options have their own pros and cons. You must consider your mission-critical needs. For example, Pimcore offers both an open-source PIM (e.g., Pimcore Community Edition) and an enterprise license model. Pimcore's Community Edition may reduce licensing costs, but it requires customization. So, if you want to build a custom PIM solution, you can go with the community edition. Enterprise editions, however, often offer more features out of the box and additional support. Your decision should consider your project budget, business needs, and required service level agreements (SLAs).

Headless vs. Traditional

A headless (API-first) PIM delivers greater flexibility and faster innovation, enabling you to "plug" the PIM into any front-end or service. Traditional PIMs may provide more built-in features or predefined workflows. If you have a composable PIM strategy, headless PIM is the ideal option. In case you want a turnkey solution, a monolithic PIM solution can address your business needs.

Deployment Model (On-Premise vs. SaaS)

Most enterprises primarily prefer cloud-based or SaaS PIM solutions as these deployment models are easier to scale and upgrade without any custom development. However, if your business must follow stringent regulations for data storage restrictions or industry compliance, you may need to adopt an on-premise deployment. Ownership costs, CapEx/OpEx, deployment speed, security, and integration flexibility are key factors to consider when selecting a deployment model.

Key Decision Points:

Choosing PIM capabilities that align with your business objectives is essential. Over-customization and under-customization can both derail your project. For example, if you want to implement PIM for global eCommerce expansion, then PIM capabilities must support translation and localization workflows, along with automated multi-channel syndication. And if your objective is robust data governance, ensure that you have strong data stewardship and audit features.

Distinguish PIM from related tools: recall that PXM (Product Experience Management) extends PIM by enabling dynamic personalization and experimentation. If your roadmap has tailored product experiences (e.g., AI-driven product enrichment for different audiences), evaluate PIM solutions that either have built-in PXM capabilities or integrate with third-party PXM platforms.

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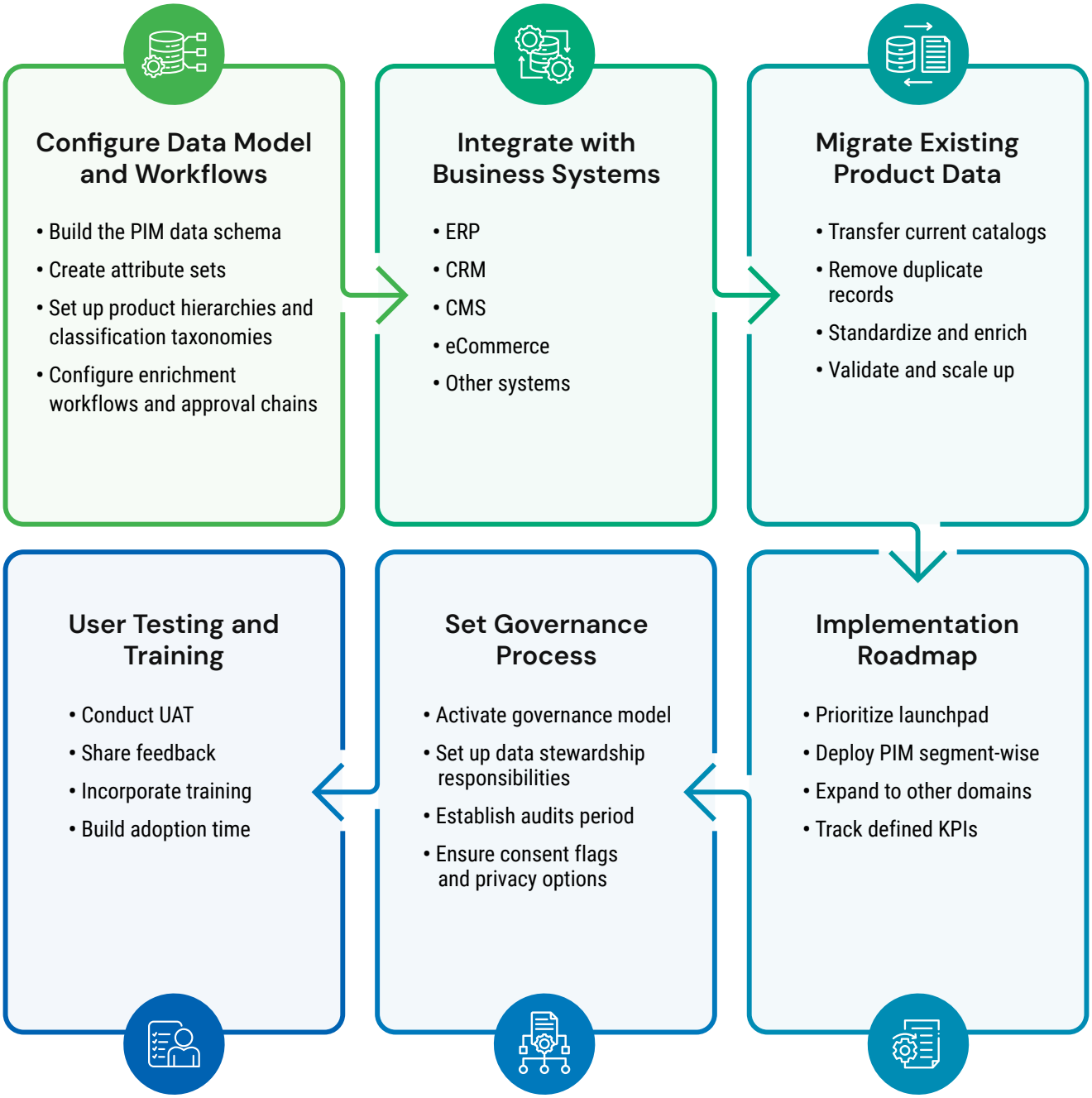
03 **Execute**: Configure, Integrate & Deploy

Execution is the phase where your PIM project can make or break your whole PIM strategy. Budget overruns occur silently during the execution phase, so stick to the defined scope and business requirement document. Ideally, an agile model is followed to gain visibility and control over the process from day one. This is where the expertise of an experienced PIM implementation partner comes into play.



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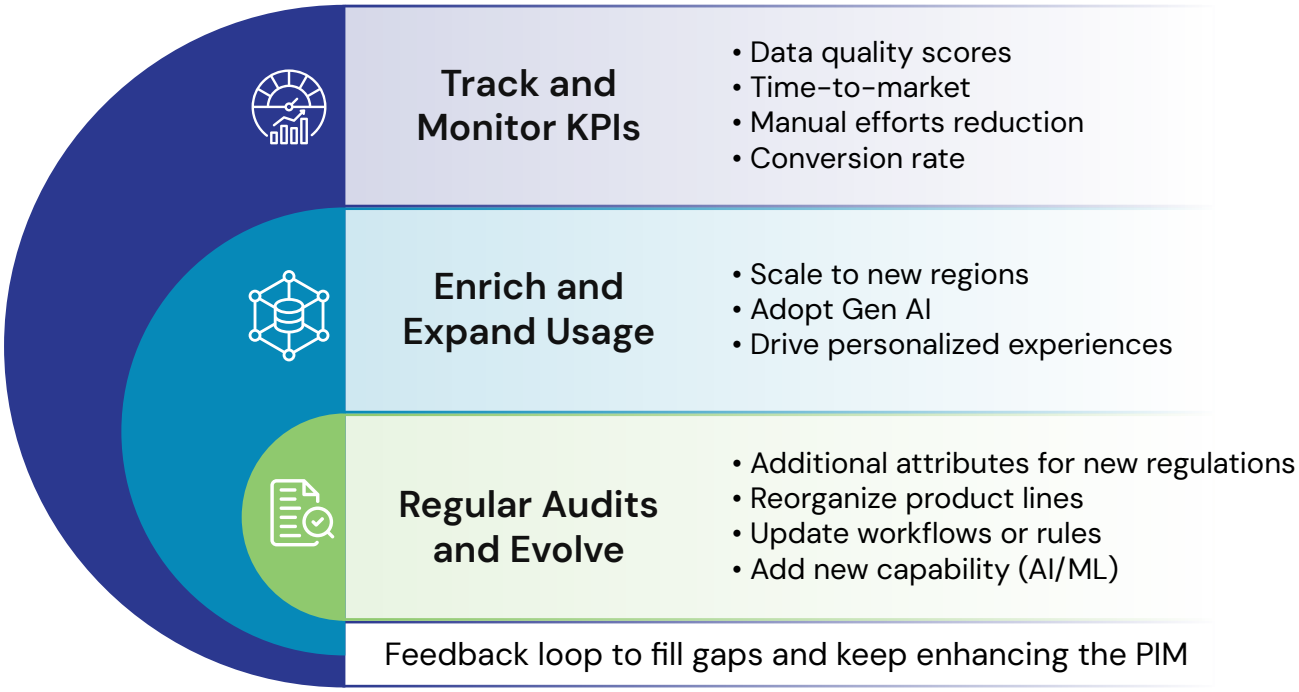
04 **Support & Optimize**: Measurement and Continuous Improvement

PIM implementation does not end at go-live. The final phase involves transforming a launched system into a long-term strategic asset through monitoring, refining, and scaling the use of the PIM.



Support Structure

Enterprise-level PIM implementation often relies on expert partners. Ensure that roles for PIM support are in place. This includes the technical team, which supports the PIM development in handling technical upkeep and maintaining optimal system performance.

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Customer Success Story

Centralized PIM FOR 40 countries, 45 Languages | DAM | B2B Microsite | Price List Table

Headquartered in Germany, the client is a multinational automotive manufacturing company, having 245K employees in 60 countries across the globe.

Business Challenge

The client sought a centralized PIM system that was flexible and robust to meet their current and future needs of data management.

They wanted to generate price catalogs periodically for their distributors and customers.

They needed a printable price list catalog for a large number of products across 30+ different markets.

The Solution

Implemented Pimcore PIM and DAM platform to centrally control and manage product information and assets.

Customized approval workflows were implemented to manage and control published assets.

The CMS solution ensured all website data management from a single interface.

Implemented a B2B microsite solution where all the dynamic information of products was showcased on a single-page layout.

Implemented LPE PIM system for product information, pricing and catalogs.

Impact

Eased accessibility of central assets to users across all countries.

Enhanced visibility of assets to central teams.

Simplified management of assets globally.

Reduced data retrieval time, improved data structure usability and viewability.

The B2B microsite makes it easier, user friendly to view product information.

Controlled product enrichment and reduced risk of incorrect information.

Massive decline in effort to consolidate articles and pricing data in various languages across sales organizations.

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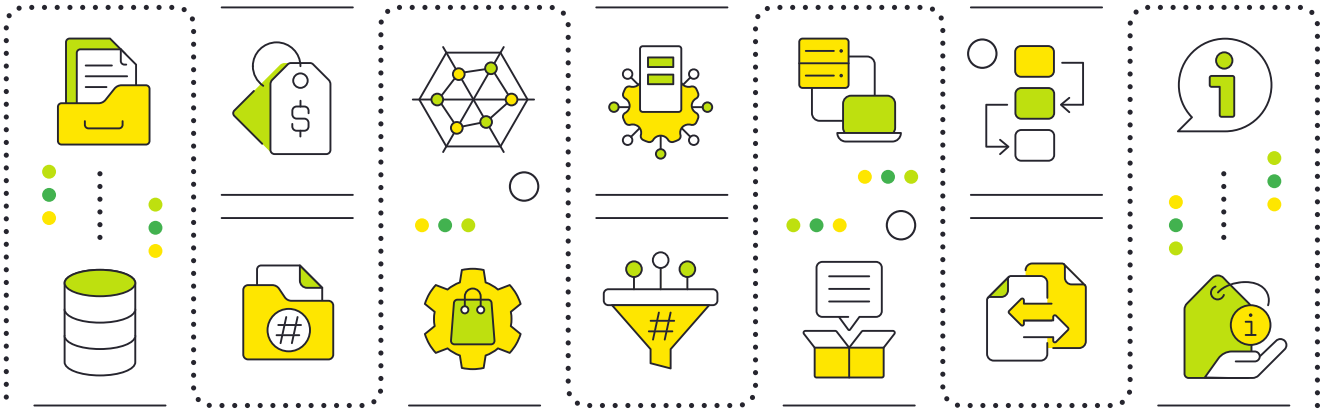
Conclusion

PIM implementation is an evolving process. Organizations that follow a structured, end-to-end approach are far more likely to succeed. Having a blueprint ready before implementation helps avoid misaligned solutions or low user adoption, ultimately delivering measurable ROI on their PIM investment.



Get Expert Guidance for Your PIM Journey

For a PIM readiness assessment or a customized implementation roadmap, connect with our PIM experts at Happiest Minds. Our team combines technology expertise with industry best practices to help ensure your PIM initiative delivers maximum value. Reach out to explore how we can support your PIM transformation.

Happiest Minds is one of the most experienced PIM solution providers with the largest pool of PIM consultants and certified developers. Our experts possess in-depth knowledge of leading PIM platforms and offer excellent global delivery capabilities for diverse industries.

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About the Author

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Ram Awadh Prasad is an Enterprise Architect with around 23+ years of experience in the Software Industry. He is a TOGAF Certified Enterprise Architect, and Google and AWS Certified Professional Architect. He has rich experience in Digital Business Transformation, Product Information Management, Master Data Management, Digital Asset Management, and Cloud Architecture. He has successfully architected and managed projects including PIM, MDM, and Digital Asset Management Solutions for Enterprises.

About Happiest Minds Technologies

Happiest Minds Technologies Limited (NSE: HAPPSTMNDS), a Mindful IT Company, enables **digital transformation** for enterprises and technology providers by delivering seamless customer experiences, business efficiency and actionable insights. We do this by leveraging a spectrum of disruptive technologies such as: **artificial intelligence**, **blockchain**, **cloud**, **digital process automation**, **internet of things**, robotics/drones, **security**, **virtual/augmented reality**, etc.
Positioned as 'Born Digital. Born Agile', our capabilities span Product & Digital Engineering Services (PDES), Generative AI Business Services (GBS) and Infrastructure Management & Security Services (IMSS). We deliver these services across industry groups: Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI), EdTech, Healthcare & Life Sciences, Hi-Tech and Media & Entertainment, Industrial, Manufacturing, Energy & Utilities, and Retail, CPG & Logistics. The company has been recognized for its excellence in Corporate Governance practices by Golden Peacock and ICSI.

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