

Hard Rock AEM DAM Authoring Do and Don't Guide

Hard Rock AEM DAM Authoring – Do & Don't Guide

Audience: *DAM architect, DAM admins, AEM authors, developers*

Scope: *AEMaaCS Assets + Sites for hardrock.com, reverb.hardrock.com, and careers properties*

1. DAM Content Architecture & Foldering

Do

- **Do treat /content/dam as a product, not a file share.** Design and document the folder structure; don't let it grow organically.
- **Do separate by brand/site first, then by domain of use.** Example pattern:
/content/dam/hardrock/{site-or-channel}/{campaign-or-category}/...
/content/dam/reverb/{site-or-channel}/{category}/...
/content/dam/careers/{region-or-market}/{job-family-or-channel}/...
- **Do group "shared" brand assets in clearly named shared libraries.** E.g., shared/brand/logo, shared/brand/photography, shared/icons.
- **Do align DAM structure with how components/pages consume assets.** If authors think in "hero images, cards, promos, job tiles," mirror that in foldering.
- **Do define a small number of "golden" folders** for high-value assets (logos, brand photography, legal assets) and protect them via permissions and process.
- **Do design for lifecycle.** Plan where "in use," "archive," and "expired/rights ended" assets live.

Don't

- **Don't mirror someone's desktop or legacy network drive structure.** Random year-based or person-based folders (/John/, /temp/, /2022/old) don't scale.
- **Don't mix multiple brands/sites in the same deep folder.** Avoid mixed-assets/misc/buckets.
- **Don't keep one massive flat folder with thousands of assets.** It hurts authoring UX and findability.
- **Don't allow "temporary" folders in production.** Anything called temp, misc, or test tends to become permanent clutter.

- **Don't store raw, huge design files (e.g., 3GB PSDs) in front-line author folders.** If they must be in DAM, isolate in separate "source" areas.

Why it matters

A deliberate, documented folder strategy makes training, governance, and future automation (workflows, metadata, Dynamic Media) far easier and reduces the chance of content debt.

2. Metadata & Tagging

Do

- **Do define a small, opinionated metadata schema for web-facing assets.** Focus on 10–20 truly useful fields (title, description, usage rights, brand, campaign, locale, channel, etc.).
- **Do make key fields mandatory where it matters.** E.g., rights/expiration, brand, locale for assets that go to public sites.
- **Do use metadata profiles and folder-level schemas** so assets in different areas get different default fields and requirements.
- **Do leverage tags (taxonomy) for reusable concepts** like campaign names, content themes, and image subjects (e.g., "live-music", "restaurant", "hotel").
- **Do capture rights/usage metadata for celebrity, event, and partnership assets** that may have tight license windows or geography constraints.
- **Do standardize naming for campaigns and releases** (YYYY–Season–CampaignName) and reuse these values in metadata and tags.

Don't

- **Don't force authors to fill 30+ fields on every upload.** Overly heavy metadata forms lead to skipped fields or junk data.
- **Don't duplicate the same information in five fields.** If something is a tag, don't also make it a free-text field and a folder name.
- **Don't use free-text fields for things that should be controlled vocabularies.** Campaign names, regions, or product lines should come from dropdowns/tags.
- **Don't mix internal-only notes with customer-facing metadata.** Keep internal comments in clearly marked fields that never publish.
- **Don't rely on people remembering license end dates from email.** It must live in metadata and drive governance decisions.

Why it matters

Good metadata is the difference between "search and find quickly" vs. "rebuild assets from scratch"

and underpins safe reuse across Hard Rock's brands and regions.

3. Uploading, Versioning & General Asset Management

Do

- **Do upload the highest-quality master that's appropriate for web usage.** Let AEM renditions/Dynamic Media handle most derivatives.
- **Do use clear, descriptive file names** (brand–channel–asset–type–keywords.**ext**) rather than generic names (image1.jpg).
- **Do replace assets *in place* when you intend to update live content.** Use the same path and rely on versions instead of new folders.
- **Do use versions before risky updates.** When changing a widely used asset, create/label a version first (e.g., Pre-rebrand logo).
- **Do use collections or saved searches** to group related assets (e.g., a campaign toolkit) without duplicating files.
- **Do periodically prune unused or obsolete assets** based on last referenced date + business rules.

Don't

- **Don't upload duplicates "just to be safe."** Multiple copies of the same logo or hero shot cause brand drift and confusion.
- **Don't delete or move assets without confirming their usage.** Always check references before moving/renaming/deleting.
- **Don't edit images offline and re-upload with a new path if the old path is still in use.** That breaks references and creates content mismatches.
- **Don't use production DAM as a testbed** for bulk uploads, batch renames, or experimental tools.
- **Don't rely on email or chat to remember which version is "approved."** Always make the approved one obvious in DAM via metadata or version labels.

Why it matters

Disciplined upload and versioning practices protect live pages from broken images and help maintain a consistent, on-brand experience.

4. Referencing Assets from Sites (and Avoiding Broken Links)

Do

- **Do always place assets in their final destination folder before using them on a page or experience fragment.**
- **Do treat any asset used in templates, core components, or shared experience fragments as “critical.”** Change them carefully and track who depends on them.
- **Do check asset references before moving/renaming.** Make this a standard admin SOP, especially for high-traffic pages (home, promos, navigation).
- **Do coordinate with Sites authors when you plan bulk moves, archive cleanups, or migrations.**
- **Do use consistent component patterns** (e.g., the same Image or Teaser components) so asset usage is predictable and traceable.

Don't

- **Don't move or rename assets that are already in use** without a clear migration plan and communication.
- **Don't hotlink from external systems into temporary folders.** Use stable, intended-for-use locations.
- **Don't forget that Images in Experience Fragments may be reused across multiple pages/sites.** A “small change” can impact many screens.
- **Don't rely on manual checks for critical pages only.** Use tools/reports to scan for missing/broken references where possible.

Why it matters

Broken or incorrect imagery on high-visibility properties (Hard Rock home, Reverb product detail, Careers landing pages) directly affects brand perception and conversion.

5. Dynamic Media (Today & Future Use)

Do

- **Do plan to use Dynamic Media for hero images, promo banners, and high-traffic visuals** where smart cropping, device targeting, and performance matter most.
- **Do define naming/folder patterns for DM-enabled assets** so it's clear which assets are optimized for DM components.
- **Do test Dynamic Media behavior thoroughly in non-prod** (renditions, smart crop, presets) before enabling on production sites.

- **Do standardize image presets** (e.g., hero, card, thumbnail) and ensure Sites components align to them.
- **Do document “when to use DM vs. standard image renditions”** for authors to avoid confusion.

Don't

- **Don't enable Dynamic Media in production without a clear rollout plan.** Start with a small, well-understood surface (e.g., a specific page or module).
- **Don't create a unique preset for every single use case.** Too many presets confuse authors and slow governance.
- **Don't assume DM assets behave identically to static ones in all components.** Validate UX and layout carefully.
- **Don't mix DM and non-DM images for the same visual pattern** unless you're in a controlled migration phase.

Why it matters

Dynamic Media can improve performance and consistency across Hard Rock properties, but only if rollout and author guidance are intentional.

6. Governance, Roles & Environments

Do

- **Do define clear roles:** who can create folder structures, who manages metadata schemas, who approves campaign/toolkits, who can delete.
- **Do enforce stricter permissions on high-risk folders** (brand logos, legal, celebrity/rights-managed content).
- **Do treat Stage as the place to test workflows, new metadata schemas, DM changes, and bulk operations** before touching production.
- **Do maintain a simple DAM change log** for structural changes (new top-level folders, new schemas, big moves) so everyone has context.
- **Do align DAM governance with Hard Rock's legal/brand review processes** (e.g., pre-launch checks for rights and expiration).

Don't

- **Don't grant everyone full control in DAM.** Separate authorship from admin capabilities.
- **Don't promote untested workflows or schema changes straight to production.**

- **Don't let one-off exceptions quietly become new standards.** If you make an exception, document whether it's temporary or a pattern.
- **Don't use production for "training by experimentation."** Use lower envs and clear training scenarios for new authors.

Why it matters

Clear governance avoids accidental outages, legal exposure, and ad-hoc "shadow processes" that make DAM harder to maintain.

7. Quality, Performance & Asset Types

Do

- **Do standardize a recommended resolution/size range** for common asset types (banners, hero images, thumbnails, PDFs).
- **Do optimize images for web before upload when they are extremely large.** AEM and DM help, but shouldn't compensate for wildly oversized assets.
- **Do keep print-only or archival assets in separate areas** so they don't clutter web author searches.
- **Do encourage authors to use existing assets where appropriate** instead of re-uploading similar files.
- **Do regularly review DAM for "heavy offenders"** (massive images, giant PDFs, unused large videos).

Don't

- **Don't upload 20+ MB images just because they "look better."** Oversized assets hurt page performance and SEO.
- **Don't publish PDFs or documents without checking accessibility and currency.**
- **Don't mix internal-only decks or reports into the same folders used for public site content.**
- **Don't rely on authors to "just know" what's too big.** Provide guidelines and examples (e.g., "home hero images should generally be under X MB").

Why it matters

Performance-sensitive sites (especially hardrock.com and Reverb) depend on efficient media for good user experience, search rankings, and conversion.

8. Communication & Intake

Do

- **Do require a simple intake checklist** when property teams request new DAM structures, metadata fields, or workflows (who, what, why, where, how often).
- **Do clarify whether a request is a one-off asset upload vs. a recurring pattern** (campaign series, new channel).
- **Do use Jira (or equivalent) to track DAM changes and larger content operations** so history is visible.
- **Do use this Do/Don't guide as a baseline for onboarding new Hard Rock authors and developers.**

Don't

- **Don't accept "just upload it somewhere" as a request.** Push back and design a sustainable place in the structure.
- **Don't silently create new top-level folders** for every new project or stakeholder.
- **Don't bypass DAM processes for high-visibility content just to go faster.** Shortcuts tend to become long-term problems.

Why it matters

Structured intake and communication ensures DAM changes support long-term needs, not just immediate fire drills.

How to Use This Guide in Day-to-Day Work

- **For DAM admins:** Use this as a review checklist before structural changes, schema updates, or bulk operations.
- **For authors:** Keep this close when uploading or replacing assets used on high-traffic pages.
- **For developers/TAs:** Use this to align component designs and automation (workflows, reports) with how DAM is intended to work.

Tip: As follow-up to the enablement session, walk through a *real* Hard Rock scenario (e.g., a new campaign or Careers launch) and map each step to these Dos and Don'ts.