PIMCORE®

Own the Digital World

Guide to deliver a perfect PIM Project

Centralize. Enrich. Syndicate.

Whitepaper

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I. Introduction | Anatomy of a PIM Project

As product information management's connection with the bottom-line gets ever more apparent, enterprises realize that beyond the hype of "sound PIM implementation" - lie results. Real results! Results that are expected from any successful product information management project.

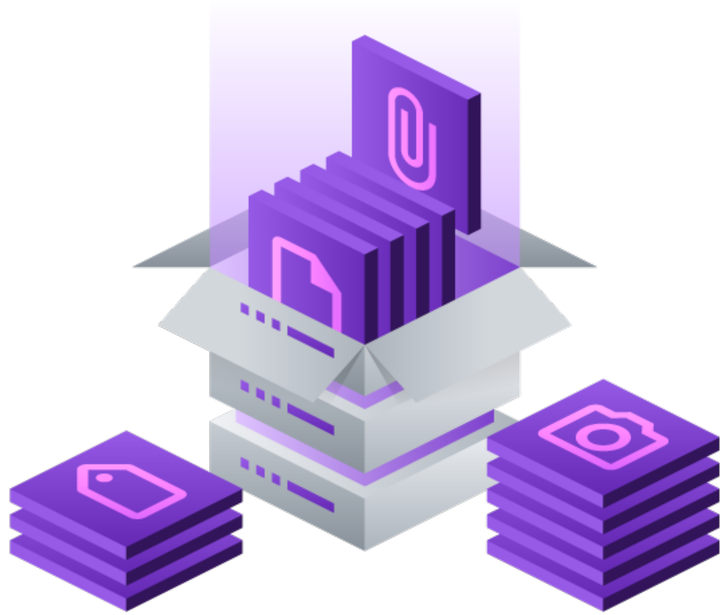
As most businesses and IT experts executing PIM projects would tell you, impediments like - lack of stakeholder buy-in, not getting executive sponsorship, inefficiency to justify the business case, absence of data governance and stewardship abilities, and most of all, massive resistance to change far outstrips businesses' technological readiness. It is this cultural shift, which is the first step towards attaining digital equality with enterprises' contemporaries in alignment with their customers' needs.

That's the reason a PIM project must be in tune with not only an enterprise's mission and vision, but also 'volition.'

A successful PIM project, therefore, starts before its start.

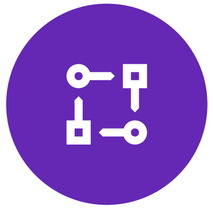
It addresses the quintessential reluctance to change, allays fears, infuses confidence, and forges a lasting relation between PIM practice and enterprise aspirations. It begins with a promise to support critical enterprise strategies aimed towards creating value and driving growth. It must be built on the premise that it will enable the enterprise digitally while complying with their ambitions.

Reviewing your IT program can be an excellent place to commence your PIM project. Identify how your product master data is placed across the value chain. Perform a 'gap analysis' between where you are and where you want to be; evaluate all available PIM systems as per your needs. And in all probability, you'll arrive at a vision of your PIM project.



II. Motivation | Getting off the Ground

Once you've aligned your businesses' long-term vision and strategy with your PIM project, the immediate next thing to map is the product lifecycle in its existing state. Define the future roadmap, scope, and describe the norms of project accomplishment; work out what needs finishing, and in what order. You must then select the right technology and architecture. Identify critical stakeholders (their roles and responsibilities), and depending on how fast you want to fix your data issues, figure out if you wish to crawl, walk, run, or fly. Also, follow these steps:



Hold Workshops

Workshops or discovery sessions should define the vision and bring everyone involved on the same page. They must do the job of acclimatizing the enterprise with the steps associated with the technical implementation of a PIM project. These workshop sessions must have an honest conversation about identifying your capabilities required to execute a PIM strategy, determine deficiencies in data, comprehend how data will flow through the system, detect chief data sources, and the integrations needed.

Consolidate Data

One of the early steps in your project should be to locate all the information and assets significant for your business and gathering them at a single place before moving it into PIM. Decide which data is critical to your enterprise goals. Locate information silos, from smallest to the most obscure ones. Trace all the crucial rich media data in its best format/resolution. Make sure files are: appropriately named, comprehendible by anyone, and conveniently attributed to products.

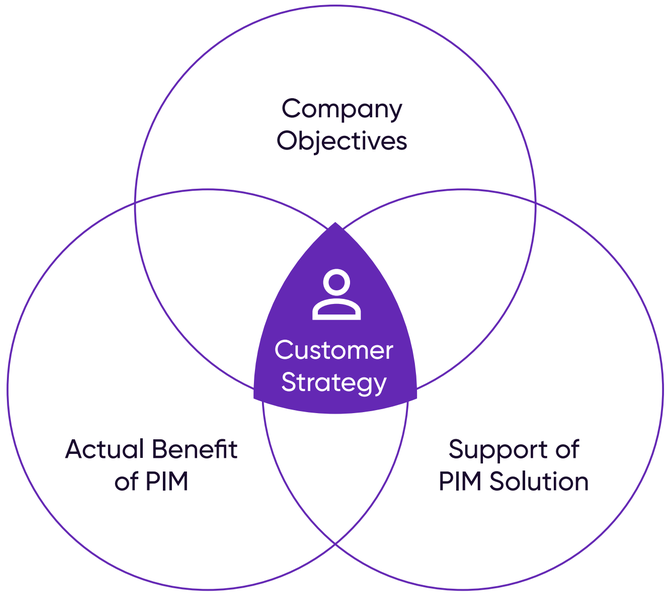
Make PIM the Basis

Identify your business case. Figure out which ends your PIM project needs to meet. Are cost reduction, revenue enhancement, business agility, or compliance your chief goals? Does it need to support sales and marketing programs, make new product introduction faster, enable more-agile business process orchestration, improve procurement efficiencies, and ability to manage risks or simplify integration processes?

III. **7 Steps** to Deliver Perfect **PIM** Implementation

1. Customer's Strategy: Understanding Perception, Positioning, Plan
2. Big Picture: Knowing the Product Lifecycle
3. Output Channel(s)
   - Critical and Not Critical
   - Existing and Not Existing
4. Data Modelling: Where Flexibility is The Key
5. Workflows and Functions
6. Data Migration and Interfaces
7. Organizational Matters
   - People
   - Knowledge
   - Resources

1. Customer's Strategy: Understanding Perception, Positioning, Plan



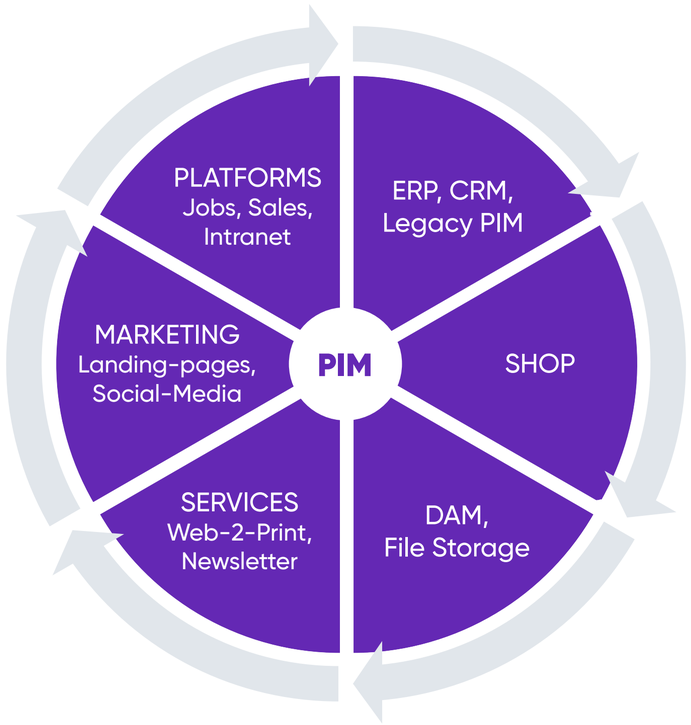
For any PIM provider, it is vital to comprehend which high-level business objectives the organization is trying to address. What's their business model, and how their digital strategy ties to it? Does their business case revolve around any specific challenge(s)? Does it also involve seeking tangible benefits such as improvement of ROI, reduction in cost alongside better compliance, and agility? Does the organization want to reuse information in a global environment? What are the real advantages of PIM the organization is looking at - are these benefits siding with their overall objectives? If Yes, how (include - industry standards, compliance, differentiators)?

Does it have to do with replacing an existing legacy or homegrown system? What more is the client expecting from a PIM implementation? Secondly, what is the internal perception in the organization regarding PIM? How would their positioning be impacted with PIM implementation in the future - and how is their business ecosystem planning to adjust with it?

In all probability, most customer strategies center around below needs:

- Efficiency in data management
- Seamless customer experience (CX)
- Getting to market faster
- Defining business processes
- Data quality improvement for enhanced conversion rates
- Deploying personalized marketing capabilities
- Attaining a single view of product data across enterprise
- Supply chain optimization
- Serving in more locations/geographies
- Tap into new market segments
- Adding more channels of commerce
- Product assortment expansion
- New product introduction (e.g., next gen, new variants, complementary products)
- Business expansion (brands, new models, or needs)
- Enablement of advanced multi-domain strategies
- Catching up with legislation changes

2. Big Picture: Know the Existing Product Management



Since products are involved, the existence of product management and a product lifecycle is almost inevitable. It's essential to understand this as it'll have a direct bearing on how a new PIM system will fit in, extend support and assist functions such as marketing, sales, services, existing platforms, etc. Therefore, it's essential to assess the present product data management (PDM) and product lifecycle management (PLM).

Specifically speaking, PDM is all about appropriately gathering, managing every bit of data with regards to production, development, order-delivery processes, and end-user support related to a factory-made product. On a more granular level, product data management is to do with creation, saving, storing, and sharing while having everyone involved on the same page, so that data utilization remains effortless. It's often carried out among different systems and is an amalgamation of distinct functionalities and features. It comprises of:

- Storage of all product information and related files
- Workflow management, Item management
- Transportation of data among diverse systems
- Administrative functions
- Retrieval, management, search and administration of data
- System interfaces to connect
- Change Management
- Product structure management

Product lifecycle management (PLM), on the other hand, is more of an all-inclusive framework with regards to the data management of products. It's mainly concerned with the lifecycle of information that comprises of developing, producing, releasing, authoring, and managing products;

It's necessary to analyze both PDM and PLM mechanisms and the interplay between these two to arrive at a bigger picture.

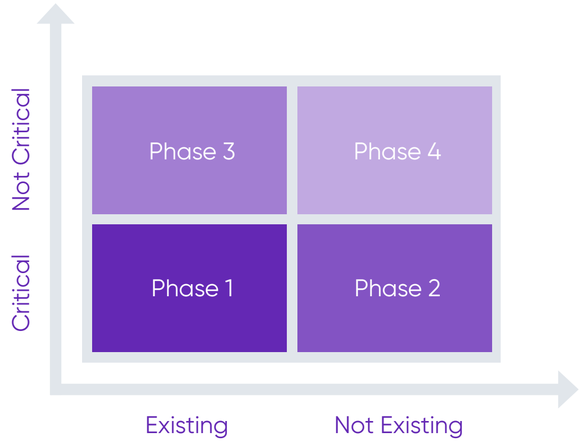
3. Output Channel(s)

An enterprise's purpose to implement PIM can't be met without a multichannel strategy that consistently delivers accurate product content. Whether you are a brand disseminating product information to multitudes of retailers/distributors or run a global multichannel commerce program, you need streamlined processes to push content into your digital touchpoints. You must also keep up with the varying content needs of marketplaces or resellers. However, the explosion of 'customer-facing' touchpoints has made it complicated—so much so, that enterprises need to figure out which channels are important for them, which aren't, which can wait, and which can't. Your objectives for being on channels of your choice could be manifold.

Whether it's physical stores, websites, marketplaces, mobile devices, call centers, point of sale systems, social platforms—it's essential to see which among them are non-negotiable for your business. You must divide them among:

Top Multichannel Marketing Objectives

Source: Gartner, Inc.



Critical and Not Critical

An example of critical channels could be CMS (website, mobile apps, pos display), eCommerce (webshop, marketplace). Not critical but desirable could be IoT (including wearables, smart homes, and vehicles)

Existing and Not Existing

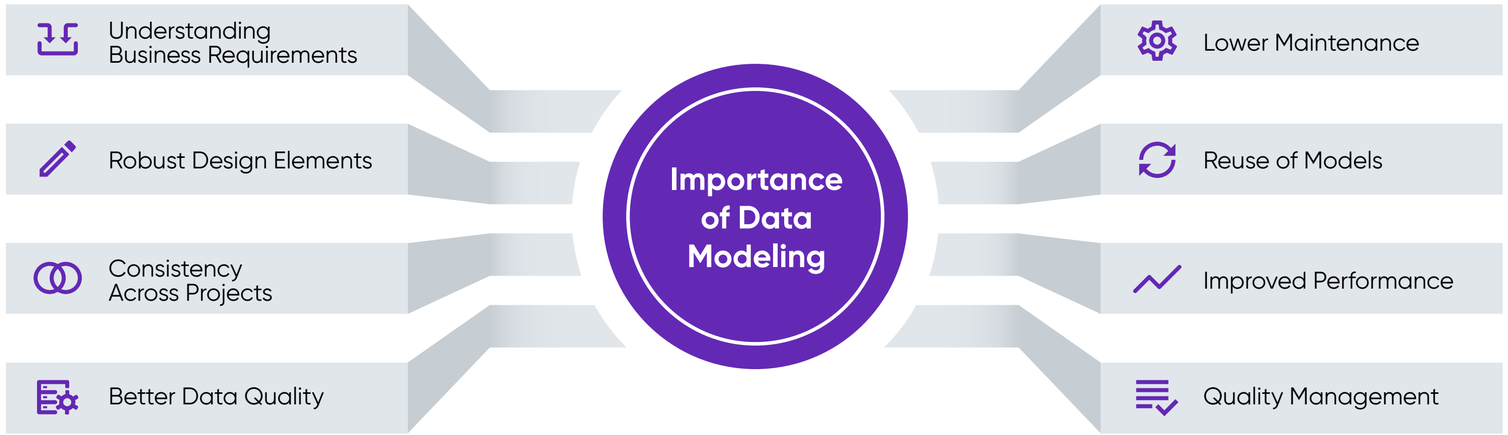
Examples of existing and critical could be CMS (website, mobile apps, pos display). Examples of non-existing but critical could be eCommerce (webshop and marketplace), Web-2-Print (datasheets, catalog). Non-existing and not critical could be conversational interfaces (including VCAs, chatbots and digital home devices). Existing and not too critical could be immersive experiences via augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR).

4. Data Modeling: Where Flexibility is The Key

One of the most significant pieces of the puzzle ina PIM implementation environment is the process of creating a data model. It's the conceptual representation of data objects and the relationship among diverse data objects and rules. It's about shaping the entity, attributes, fields, completeness rules, validation rules so that data objects needed by the database are correctly displayed.

Everything needs to be suitably configured and tested. A sound data model makes sure right uniformity in default values, security, naming conventions, and semantics while guaranteeing the quality of data. This is basically to ensure that the data model matches your business requirements; it helps achieve what it had set out to achieve while offering you the right scalability to grow.

Your PIM will ensure that your data model addresses which data is required and how it will be organized. It's not concerned about how that data is going to get used. A PIM provider must have as much clarity on this as possible so as to perceive and prevent as many unforeseeable challenges. It is vital to go through the requirement of your data model (at least get an idea) so as to detect and prevent uncertainties in your future data model in the early stages only. To summarize, a data model acts like a blueprint of a newly constructed house, created on the basis of a conceptual, logical, or physical model, setting the relationship amid data items.



5. Workflows and Functions

General PIM Product Data Workflow

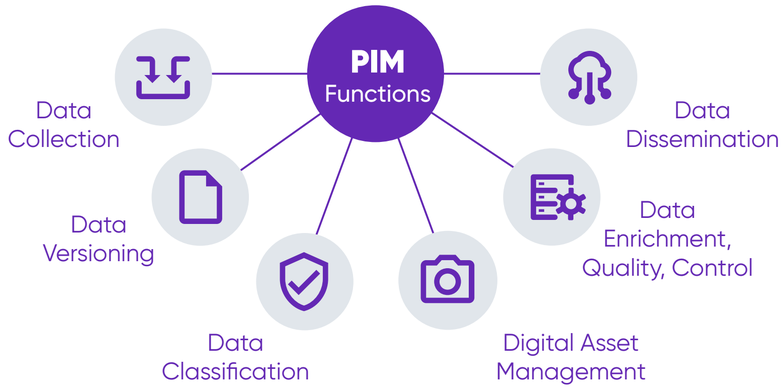
Import Data > **Arrange and Assort** > **Edit and Translate** > **Ensure Quality and Integrity** > **Export Data**

So, how does an inflexible workflow look? One of the key indicators could be being dependent on manual ways during the onboarding of new content and products from vendors, involving spreadsheets, email trails, and approvals. This not only compromises data accuracy and dependency but leads to a slower time-to-market. To navigate through a complex web of information flow chain for compelling product experiences, responsibilities must be distributed lucidly, highly refined and specific workflows must be put in place to build smart processes around key tasks accompanied by remarks, reviews and permissions. A workflow could be as simple as a process that calls for an image related to a particular product.

Similarly, when you step out to choose a PIM vendor for your digital business, you must bear in mind the core functions of your business needs. A PIM solution typically includes functionalities such as syndication of content to marketing channels, sales channels, and marketplaces; onboarding content from suppliers; omnichannel master data management and product experience management.

Looking at it granularly, activities such as article creation, quality assurance, translation, fall under the purview of workflows, while rights and roles, output channel fall under security management.

Apart from these core functionalities, PIM providers offer hybrid packages, which come bundled with other business solutions.



6. Data Migration and Interfaces

The migration of your data from legacy systems cannot happen before profiling, cleansing, and making sure its quality is up to the mark. Different formats residing in various software and hardware systems within an organization pose a considerable challenge from the standpoint of information migration.

Several times data can be comprehended only by the program that wrote it, implying that data though transferred may remain as an incoherent chunk of information that must be interpreted, converted, translated as well as synchronized to attain consistency of information. To support an uninterrupted flow of data from various systems within the organizations, there needs to be a smooth import from spreadsheets, CSV files, 3rd party applications, and relational databases. It must be clarified at the outset which data must be imported and which should be entered manually. The challenge can be enormous when organizations have a massive bulk of products and rich content files.
A smart PIM system should be able to provide many-layered import abilities to make the process of import swift and uncomplicated.

In addition, there are usually interfaces to other systems that communicate with PIM. One of the first steps towards data consolidation is the integration of relevant data existing in a variety of databases, applications, and formats. Most of the time, it takes place only when organizations create import and export interfaces, where data conversion is mostly done manually by dealing with each case individually.

To speed it up, user interfaces must be appropriately customizable for process-driven and intuitive data management. A PIM system, having a robust and flexible data import and export apparatus that integrates with various source systems, can help you here. It facilitates your data import and export from one central location, adjusting to the speed and your requirements automatically.

7. Organizational Matters

No project can see the light of the day if it doesn't get a nod from the high-ranking line-of-business (LOB) executives who have their cost management, revenue, as well as growth and expansion goals to realize. The bigger the enterprise, the greater is the amount of product master data used or replicated throughout it. With increasing duplicate data, the effort to bring down the redundancy, and keeping the data clean also increases. While higher-ups in the hierarchy chain may see it as the duty of IT or the CIO, it must be brought to the notice of a wider bench of decision-makers, because ultimately the buy-in will help the entire value chain via slashing costs and assisting teams in meeting their individual goals. It can be helpful to cite cases in point among your contemporaries, partners, or enterprises from other LOBs who've used PIM and seen better growth. It's also necessary to have a plan of action in hand that explains to the stakeholders how the goals will be realized, what possible technologies or solutions could help, what will be the best processes to achieve these organizational goals. Before executing a PIM project for anyone, there are some aspects your PIM provider must know:

People

A PIM provider needs to find out who is the number one contact person for answering all their critical questions. They must be reliable, approachable, and appointed by the topmost decision-makers responsible for the project. This person must know what the project is all about and what the enterprise wishes to achieve through it. He/she must have the power to give sanctions, clearances, and appoint people to facilitate the project.

Knowledge

Without knowing where the product information is lying, nothing can move forward in the PIM project. Knowledge about where it resides must be shared as soon as the project gets a go-ahead. Keepers of the data or the people associated with maintaining databases must be identified and asked to comply.

Resources

Evaluation of the resources for carrying out the project is almost critical for project management, data inputs, as well as interface programming. The question of resources is crucial to the very existence of a PIM project. If the enterprise lacks the necessary technological apparatus, then it must be advised accordingly. Consultations must take place, and needs must be fulfilled.

IV. Open-Source Pimcore PIM

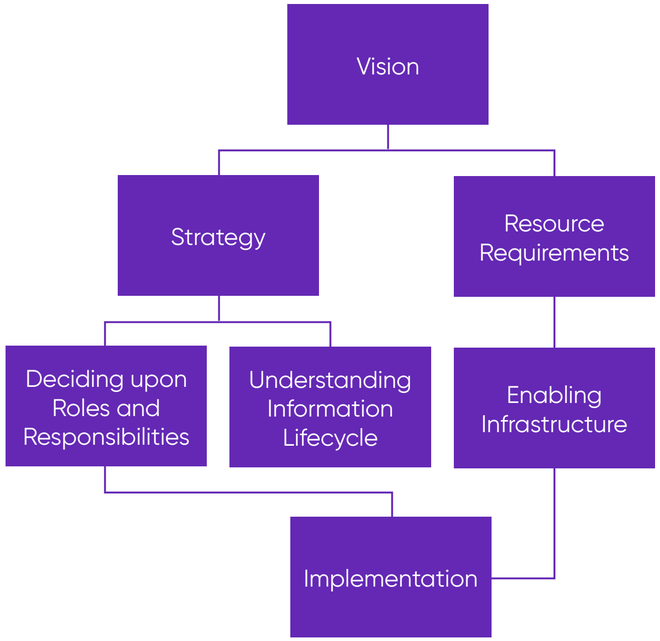
Hassle-Free Integration, Fit for Any Digital Data

No matter what the needs of your PIM project are, two things that will form its building blocks are centralization of your product data and trouble-free integration with your existing IT systems. And Pimcore, the open-source alternative for PIM, comes out tops on both these aspects.

Pimcore consolidates and integrates any size, any type, and any format of digital data for organizations of any size or belonging to any industry; this multi-vector and multi-domain compatibility gives it a unique edge.

The API-led, service-oriented architecture (SOA) of Pimcore facilitates swift and seamless linking to CRMs, ERPs, Business Intelligence, legacy systems, or any 3rd party applications.

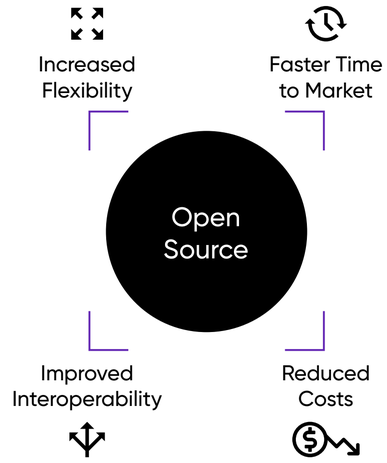
Pimcore knows extremely well that quality and accuracy of data are inextricably linked with customer-related business drivers such as- customer experience, customer service- which will ultimately lead to customer loyalty; that's the reason we keep your customers on our priority.



IV. Open-Source Pimcore PIM

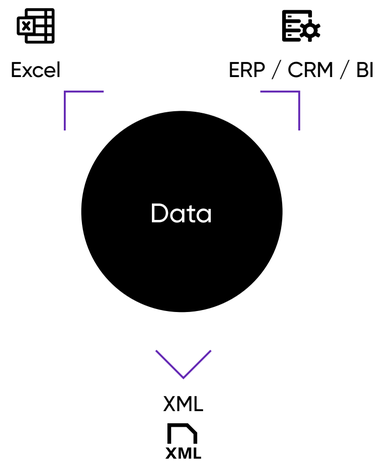
Pimcore PIM gets you the desired results

Open Source PIM for Enterprises



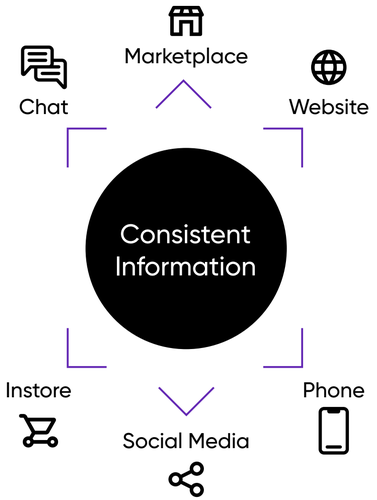
No Recurring Costs
No License Fee

Advanced Product Data Intergration



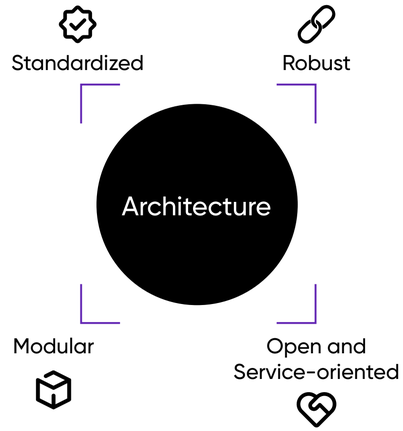
Eliminates
Data Silos

Omnichannel Enablement



Channel Agnostic
Seamless Engagement

100% API-Driven



Connect Anything
Approach

IV. Open-Source Pimcore PIM

Why Pimcore's PIM?

Drive Faster Growth and Awesome ROI

- Centralized data management
- Integration with systems and databases
- Advanced workflow management
- Multi-domain and multi-vector compatibility
- Reduction in time-to-market

V. About the Author

Dietmar Rietsch

CEO / Co-Founder

As CEO and co-founder of Pimcore,
Dietmar Rietsch deals with new technologies and the digital transformation of companies daily.

Dietmar is a passionate entrepreneur who has been designing and realizing exciting digital projects for more than 20 years.

Linkedin Profile

Awards & Recognition

G2 CROWD
★★★★½
4.4 out of 5

Gartner peerinsights
★★★★★
4.9 out of 5

Capterra
★★★★★
5 out of 5

Gartner
Cool Vendor
for PIM & E-Commerce

IDC
MarketScape PIM
for Commerce 2019–2020

FORRESTER®
PIM Vendor Landscape,
Now Tech Report: Digital
Experience Platforms

ABOUT PIMCORE

- **Founded in 2013**
- **150+ Solution Partners**
  such as Infosys, Arvato Systems and many digital agencies and system integrators
- **110,000 companies**
  such as Audi, Pepsi, Dr Oetker, Yamaha

GET IN TOUCH

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