



Marketing Asset Management Grows Up

Leading Companies Integrate Marketing
Assets with ERP and CRM

Scott Richardson
Longwood Software, Inc.
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It starts with the realization that it would be useful to exchange data between your company's marketing systems and your enterprise ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) applications.

A marketing manager thinks, "Wouldn't it be great if a salesperson -- while he is preparing a proposal and gathering supporting materials from the company's marketing asset management system -- could quickly determine product availability based on inventory information stored in our ERP application?" Or a marketing communications manager wonders, "Wouldn't we increase efficiency if our marketing portal could email brochures to prospects directly from our CRM application?"

The fact is, every minute saved counts in business, and efficiency is needed more than ever in these times of reduced headcounts. But the quality of the end-user experience, whether she or he is a salesperson inside the company, a distribution partner, or a customer, also is important. This is why many organizations increasingly are taking steps to make that experience a good one by implementing a robust marketing asset management (MAM) system.

According to a 2010 study by Aberdeen Group, *Marketing Asset Management: Managing Brand Compliance in Distributed Marketing Environments*, marketing asset management systems that centralize the processes of accessing, creating and deploying marketing materials are key for corporate brand control and company-wide efficiency. This study found that companies who deployed these MAM systems achieved a 24% average year-over-year increase in annual revenue, compared to a 2% increase in other companies.

The Next Step

Once you've implemented a marketing asset management system, what is the next step? Synching up marketing asset management systems with core CRM and ERP technologies is developing into a mainstream "best practice" across industries. Thus MAM systems are "growing up" to become essential information repositories within the enterprise.

A challenge arises in integrating these applications and systems successfully. If problems occur when independent resources such as MAM, CRM and ERP become interdependent and begin to collaborate across IT boundaries, the issue won't just be "a slow application" — even though that is exactly what the end-user will experience. It might also result in inaccurate information, sales team frustration, customer dissatisfaction, and lost sales.

The importance of having a successful integration, and an experienced MAM company with good references handling the integration, therefore becomes paramount. Chris Houpis, a senior analyst, Marketing Strategy and Effectiveness, Aberdeen Group, confirms this. Of 431 organizations he surveyed, 60% of them look for demonstrated success as their top vendor selection criterion for marketing asset management solutions.

Successful Integrations

It's good to report that some companies have achieved success integrating their MAM systems with other enterprise applications to automate production and distribution of marketing assets. They are reaping the benefits, including a simpler user experience.

Quincy Compressor, which makes and sells high-quality air compressors and vacuum pumps, integrated its MAM system with the company's CRM application. This integration resulted in a lead management process whereby customer data captured by the MAM system during literature requests on the public web site automatically is fed into the CRM/lead generation and management system. A reduction in the cost of lead processing has already occurred thanks to this integration.

The company also ties its MAM system into its quote and product ordering system. When a quote is requested, literature easily can be attached to the quote and sent as a complete package. This helps its distributors deliver a more professional-looking presentation to prospective customers.

The integration of Quincy Compressor's MAM and CRM systems has improved the accuracy, quality and timeliness of the information that the field receives. It has increased marketing's ability to serve multiple sales channels and support its sales executives and reps with the same or less staff than before. It has also greatly reduced the print budget and inventory, and significantly reduced print waste.

Another company, a unit of Thermo Fisher Scientific, the \$10 billion world leader in serving science, has 29,000 marketing and technical documents in its MAM, including over 22,000 Certificates of Analysis, which are documents required by customers to identify exact formulas and certify each product lot.

Of course, loading such a large volume of assets manually is not possible. So the company's MAM system automatically uploads new and updated product data and

documents from the company's SAP system. This greatly streamlines the distribution of these assets in support of the sales process.

A leading pharmaceutical and consumer healthcare company is taking another approach. Its MAM automates the creation and management of items from master product data pulled from SAP. This eCommerce and sales support system imports product data and spec sheets that retailers need to order products, and exports orders to its SAP inventory management system. Product activity information is also sent by the MAM system to the SAP system.

What Does the Future Hold?

Where does MAM grow from here? With the trend towards less people managing more content in expanding global organizations, it's heading in the direction of more mixed technology environments at companies who need to automate and streamline their marketing/sales processes even further.

Industry analysts predict that leading-edge marketers will transition to Marketing Asset Collaboration, with increased plugs to CRM systems such as Salesforce.com and Oracle. This is already being seen. One industry analyst, Kim Collins of Gartner, says that marketing resource management is shifting into a platform model and that many companies now want to put an end-to-end process in place that enables marketing assets to be accessible and re-usable throughout the enterprise.

One thing is certain. Marketing Asset Management has become mission critical and will continue to evolve as companies' information needs become more complex and interconnected.

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Scott Richardson is CEO and president of Longwood Software, developer of the RevBase® (www.revbase.com) SaaS marketing asset management solution and ForFile® (www.forfile.com) SaaS file transfer service. Contact him at scott@longwoodsoftware.com.