Enrich Customer Experiences With Product Content

Leverage DAM And PIM To Empower Your Customers And Boost Your Bottom Line

FORRESTER®

Table Of Contents

Project Director:
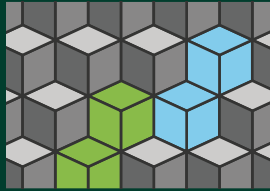Megan Doerr,
Market Impact Consultant

Contributing Research:
Forrester's Application
Development & Delivery research
group

ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

Forrester Consulting provides independent and objective research-based consulting to help leaders succeed in their organizations. Ranging in scope from a short strategy session to custom projects, Forrester's Consulting services connect you directly with research analysts who apply expert insight to your specific business challenges. For more information, visit forrester.com/consulting.

FORRESTER®

Executive Summary

Today's customers demand more digital content than ever before, and organizations are struggling to keep up. Product content in particular, which is essential for customers making online purchases, needs to be compelling and reliable. But in the struggle to ramp up product content creation to keep pace with digital business, many marketers fall short in delivering customers the engaging and informative content they deserve.

This misstep can be attributed in large part to the management (or mismanagement) of data on the back end. Many organizations have multiple disparate tools, ineffective strategies, and misaligned visions that prevent them from putting their best product content forward. A combined digital asset management (DAM) and product information management (PIM) strategy can help address these challenges and empower organizations with relevant, informative product content.

Widen, an Acquia company commissioned Forrester Consulting to evaluate brands' product content strategies and consumers' perceptions of content. Forrester conducted an online survey with 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers and 360 consumers to explore this topic.

KEY FINDINGS

› **Current product content strategies lack the foundation for success.** While organizations are prioritizing key consumer marketing and content initiatives, their strategies and tools do not position them to support these initiatives effectively. Consequently, both the quality and impact of their product content fall short.

› **Organizational, process, and tech challenges set brands up for failure.** Unclear strategies, team silos, and poor integration adoption make delivering better product content difficult. Further, nearly 50% of organizations say the "discover" and "explore" phases are the most difficult to deliver content in, which are also the phases consumers rely on product content the most.

› **Consumers pay the price for poor content strategies.** Both decision-makers and consumers are aware of the lack of relevant experiences provided as a result of insufficient product content. Getting this right is imperative: The majority of consumers say they'd be less likely to purchase — or wouldn't purchase at all — if content doesn't align to their intent.

› **Combining the power of DAM and PIM on the back end can ultimately improve customer experience (CX) on the front end.** Streamlining your internal approach to product content creation can help deliver richer product content, resulting in more positive customer experiences and an increased number of conversions.

A cohesive DAM and PIM strategy can help address strategic and technical challenges, while empowering organizations to create personalized, informative product content.

FORRESTER®

Current Product Content Strategies Lack The Foundation For Success

Today's consumers rely heavily on digital commerce, more so than ever before. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital delivery has become consumers' interaction of choice, even for those who may not have previously felt inclined. This puts added pressure on e-commerce marketers to improve content and produce at scale. Organizations need to ramp up digital content to make their voice heard in a crowd of increasingly noisy competitors. But it's not enough to just provide *more* content. It's now more important than ever to deliver the content your customers need, when they need it, in a way that's compelling and useful for them. Digital marketers know the customer experiences they deliver must be consistent and contextual across all channels — from e-commerce, to print, to physical locations.

This poses a problem for marketers in charge of product content: How do they manage product data, digital assets, and branded marketing content across disconnected systems and channels? Additionally, how do they deliver this content across digital channels at scale? These processes are still disconnected and inefficient for most, which directly impacts consumers and organizations' bottom line.[1]

The answer lies in the examination of supporting technology, which historically falls outside of most marketers' wheelhouse. We found that:

› **The top content priorities of survey respondents are to improve ROI, insights, and experiences.** Over the next 12 months, survey respondents have reported their organization's intent to focus on the pillars of contextual, beneficial customer experiences (see Figure 1). However, their current content management processes do not support these goals: Just five out of 10 content marketers feel that their segmentation and level of product detail are sufficient, while a mere 43% consider their personalization processes adequate to support content priorities. Personalization, product detail, and segmentation are key to delivering relevant experiences to customers, but success is built on a foundation of solid content management processes.

› **Organizations use a broad range of technology solutions to support product content optimization.** The most critical technologies which are utilized to meet these priorities include a swath of content- and product-related tools. Roughly seven out of 10 content marketers use PIM solutions (72%), customer relationship management (CRM) solutions (72%), DAM solutions (69%), marketing automation platforms (69%), and SEO/SEM management systems (68%).[2] Yet effective content optimization is jeopardized if these technology solutions are not well-integrated.

Content processes, tools, and strategies are largely setting organizations up for content failure.

FORRESTER®

> › **Organizations don't treat content like the strategic asset it is.**
> Nearly half of organizations use DAM or PIM tools to manage brand
> and product content at the department level, while fewer than a
> third manage DAM or PIM at an enterprise level. These solutions are
> critical to optimizing content, but the lack of a holistic strategy puts
> organizations at risk of creating subpar workflows and analysis. Further,
> there is a disconnect between the metrics that marketers are using
> and their strategic content goals. Top metrics used to measure content
> performance include: page views/traffic (70%), search engine results/
> page rankings (61%), and the number of transactions (60%). None of
> which provide full visibility into strategic performance.

Figure 1

Top Marketing And Content Priorities Over The Next 12 Months

Effectiveness Of Content Management Processes To Support This Priority

63% Improve ROI — 67%

58% Improve our use of consumer data/analytics — 58%

56% Improve omnichannel marketing capabilities — 62%

55% Improve quality of digital experiences — 58%

53% Improve personalization capabilities — 43%

52% Develop new products/services — 51%

50% Improve/add marketing technology options — 59%

48% Improve lead/opportunity quality — 52%

41% Improve level of product detail provided — 51%

41% Improve segmentation/targeting — 49%

> **Marketing and content priorities could be better supported by content management processes.**

Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

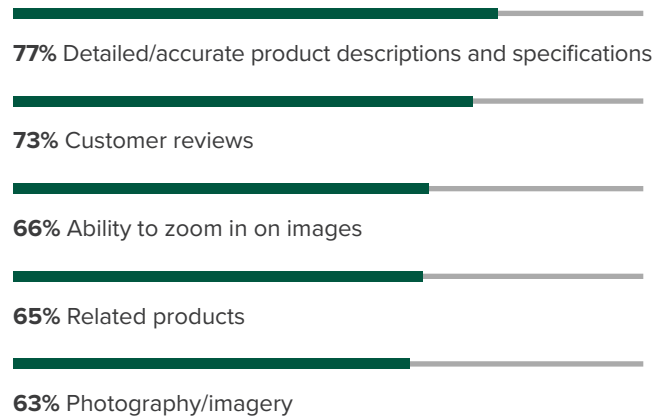# Organizational, Process, And Tech Challenges Set Brands Up For Failure

The current technology and team structures across many organizations prime them for one huge problem: They struggle to fill content gaps at the most critical phases of the customer journey (see Figure 2). Nearly half of organizations report the "discover" and "explore" phases as being the most difficult in which to deliver content. This also happens to be where consumers have the greatest need for accurate and detailed product content. Earlier in the customer lifecycle (or higher up in the funnel for some brands), companies know less about their consumers, making it harder to deliver content effectively. Without that customer intelligence, it's nearly impossible for brands to create unique content experiences that will leave their customers wanting to come back for more.

Figure 2

"Which point in the customer journey/lifecycle is most difficult to deliver content?"

Discover	Explore	Buy	Use	Ask	Engage
30%	**19%**	**9%**	**5%**	**8%**	**9%**

Establish loyalty
19%

Consumers' Top Five Information Sources To Inform A Purchase*

77% Detailed/accurate product descriptions and specifications

73% Customer reviews

66% Ability to zoom in on images

65% Related products

63% Photography/imagery

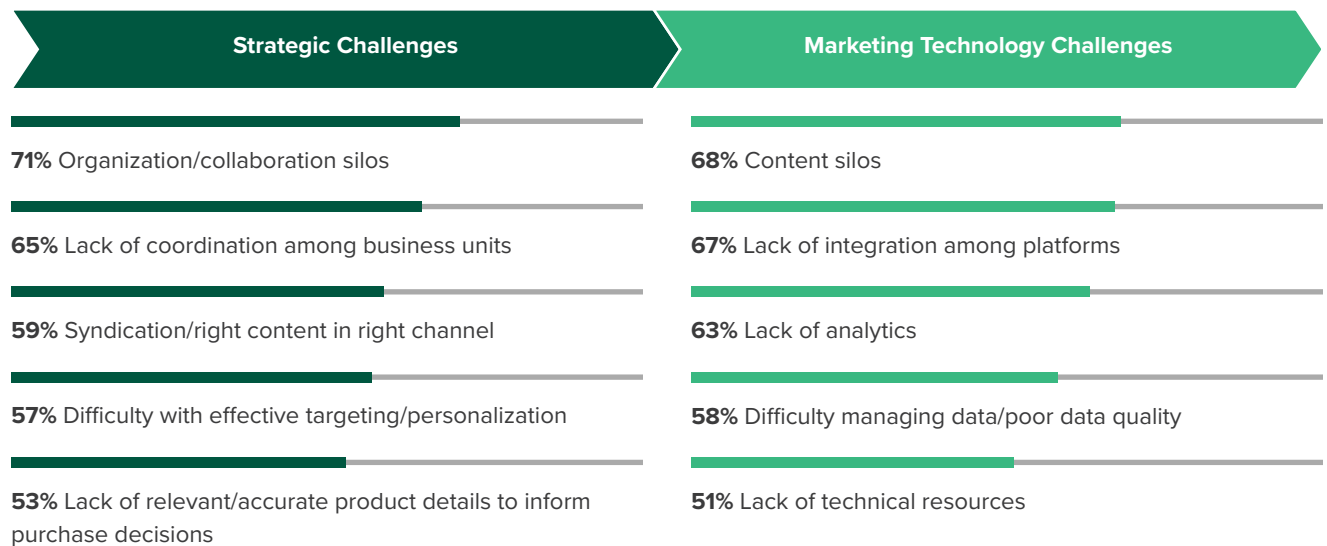Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
*Base: 360 consumers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

CURRENT STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGY DON'T SUPPORT AN INTEGRATED CONTENT APPROACH

The top barriers to the successful delivery of a more integrated content strategy are silos across both the teams responsible for creating and managing product content and in the supporting technologies (see Figure 3). Content management technology decisions and processes are often managed at the team or departmental level, resulting in multiple, disparate platforms. This results in customer content being siloed and a lack of integration that makes it difficult for organizations to reconcile different data sources and access the insights needed to create more streamlined workflows. It also introduces content delivery challenges: When data lives across numerous systems, processes and ownership become murky.

Figure 3

Strategic Challenges	Marketing Technology Challenges
71% Organization/collaboration silos	**68%** Content silos
65% Lack of coordination among business units	**67%** Lack of integration among platforms
59% Syndication/right content in right channel	**63%** Lack of analytics
57% Difficulty with effective targeting/personalization	**58%** Difficulty managing data/poor data quality
53% Lack of relevant/accurate product details to inform purchase decisions	**51%** Lack of technical resources

Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
Note: Only top 5 shown for each question.
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

When organizations are unable to integrate customer data to inform the right attributes and allow their products to stand out on the digital shelf, they run the risk of dissatisfied customers and revenue loss. This risk is present at all stages of the customer lifecycle. For example, the customer may be unable to find your product during the "discover" phase. Or perhaps during the "buy" phase, a customer may be dissatisfied if the product they received did not meet their expectations due to misleading, inaccurate, or incomplete product information.

Further impeding their ability to produce better content, organizations struggle to manage product data. Roughly one-third of content decision-makers experience challenges in tracking the impact of product data, receiving an abundance of low-quality data, and using manual processes. The human aspect of these factors plays a significant role in the effectiveness of both these processes and the technology that supports them (see Figure 4).

If these challenges are not addressed, organizations risk suffering detrimental outcomes. Seventy-three percent of content decision-makers have experienced negative business impacts as a result of disparate DAM and PIM solutions, including high product return rates (29%), lower customer engagement post-sale (27%), and increased customer service calls (18%).

These decision-makers also receive negative business impacts as a result of these struggles, including missed customer expectations (70%), a lack of understanding of customers (66%), decreased customer satisfaction (63%), inconsistent workflows (56%), and missed revenues (56%). Product content that isn't accurate, compelling, and relevant will result in unhappy customers, and it will introduce a negative impact on your bottom line.

Figure 4

Challenges With Creating And Managing Product Attribute Information

36%
Low quality data from suppliers

34%
Unable to track the impact of product attribute data

31%
Current processes are too time-consuming

27%
High volumes of customer service calls/emails

23%
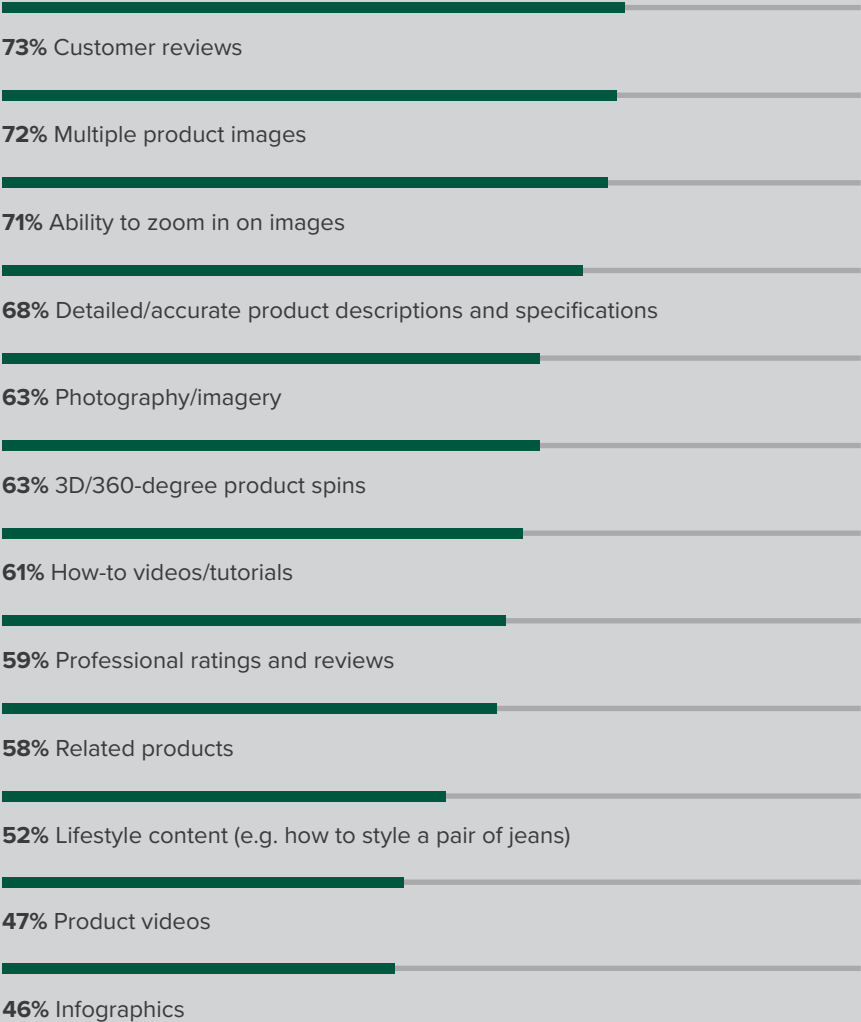Difficulty managing rich media content

Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

Consumers Pay The Price For Poor Content Strategies

As organizations struggle to make sense of their processes, customer experience also suffers. We know that consumers crave various types of product content to support their purchase decisions. We also know that they feel most empowered when they can easily access complete, accurate, and easy-to-consume product information and reviews. Consumers' preference for customer reviews and information provided by retailers makes accuracy, accessibility, and relevance of this information increasingly important (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

"How confident do you feel in making an online purchase based on the product attribute information (e.g., weight, dimensions) you receive from brands?"

73% Customer reviews

72% Multiple product images

71% Ability to zoom in on images

68% Detailed/accurate product descriptions and specifications

63% Photography/imagery

63% 3D/360-degree product spins

61% How-to videos/tutorials

59% Professional ratings and reviews

58% Related products

52% Lifestyle content (e.g. how to style a pair of jeans)

47% Product videos

46% Infographics

Base: 360 consumers in NA and EMEA
Note: Percentage indicates "confident" + "extremely confident"
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

FORRESTER®

PERSONALIZATION IS THE ANSWER, BUT ONLY IF EXECUTED CORRECTLY

Consumers have an extremely strong preference for brand experiences and product information to be tailored to their individual needs. If the delivered content and experiences don't align with the customers' intent, or they fall below expectations, the majority of consumers say they'd be less likely to purchase (see Figure 6).

Both content makers and consumers recognize that there is still a long way to go in making content more relevant and accurate. They both realize that personalized experiences are at the heart of a winning customer experience. Personalized experiences are those in which a person's preferences, history, context, and intent are used to frame, guide, extend, and enhance interactions.
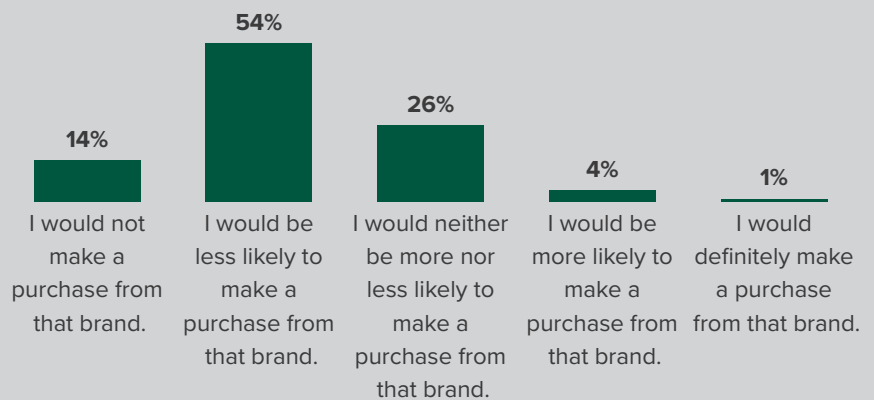
However this is easier said than done for most: Customers' needs and search strategies are rarely aligned with retailers' or suppliers' internal hierarchies and taxonomies. While personalization is a high priority for 60% of organizations, decision-makers don't think their organizations are doing a good job of delivering it, and consumers echo that sentiment (see Figure 7). Content is key to understanding products and brands, yet brands themselves are rather taking a one-size-fits-all approach.

Figure 6
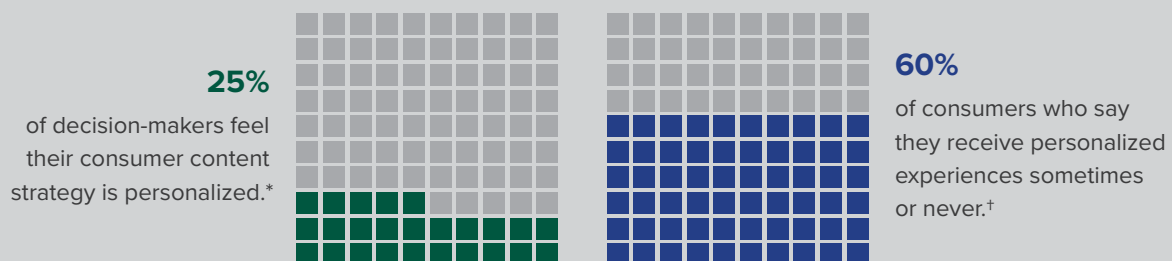**Consumer Preference For Experience Tailored Specifically To Their Needs**

"If a brand provides a digital purchasing experience that is not tailored to your preferences and/or needs correctly, what impact would that have on your decision to purchase from that brand in the future?"

80%
Overall brand experience

70%
Product attribute information

43%
Brand communications

14%
I would not make a purchase from that brand.

54%
I would be less likely to make a purchase from that brand.

26%
I would neither be more nor less likely to make a purchase from that brand.

4%
I would be more likely to make a purchase from that brand.

1%
I would definitely make a purchase from that brand.

Base: 360 consumers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

Figure 7

25%
of decision-makers feel their consumer content strategy is personalized.*

60%
of consumers who say they receive personalized experiences sometimes or never.†

*Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
†Base: 360 consumers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

FORRESTER®

Combining The Power Of DAM And PIM On The Back End Improves CX On The Front End

Simply having a comprehensive amount of product data is not enough to build trust and loyalty with consumers, the information has to be accurate and applicable to what your consumers need. Accurate product data is a core pillar of building customer trust and should not be taken lightly: 64% of consumers say they inherently trust product information from the brands they do business with. Doing right by your customers, providing accurate information, and creating a beneficial experience that builds trust and confidence are the ultimate goals.

Investing in a more strategic view and toolset to manage data and assets together helps power content to support business goals and KPIs. An integrated DAM and PIM strategy centralizes content and streamlines workflows, enabling more precise and accessible insights, improved scalability, and better content consistency (see Figure 8). This helps organizations to: 1) invest in the content that will be most impactful on conversion and 2) leverage automation capabilities to develop and deliver effective content at greater scale. Further, respondents say that a more accurate, robust set of product information can improve customer satisfaction (68%), increase sales (63%), improve loyalty (59%), increase average order value (56%), and improve omnichannel experiences (51%). One thing is certain: Product content improvements can bring tremendous growth.

Figure 8
Benefits Of Using DAM And PIM Tools Together

71% More precise insights

62% Improved scalability

61% Easier to obtain insights

58% Improved brand/content consistency

56% Increased sales

52% Enhanced collaboration across teams

46% More coordinated/efficient workflows

36% Ability to better personalize content

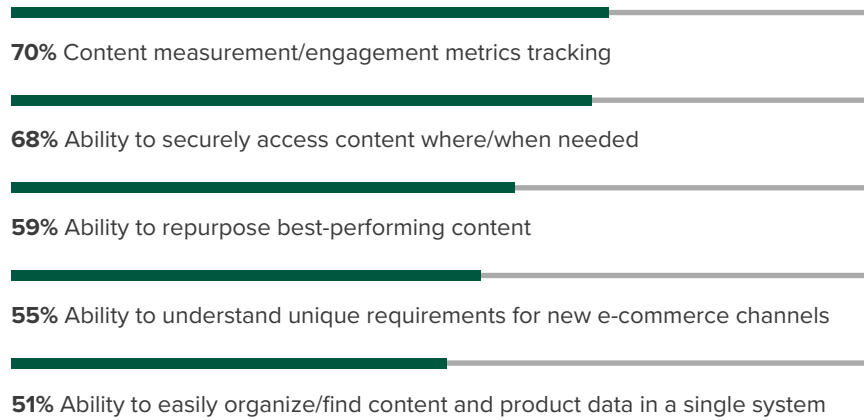**35%** Continuity across channels and touchpoints

Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

FORRESTER®

More specifically, organizations benefit from the functionality in their DAM and PIM solutions to fuel an agile content strategy that meets and exceeds customer expectations (see Figure 9). To fully flourish, organizations should prioritize solutions with capabilities that support the foundations of personalized product content, e.g., extensive metrics tracking, the ability to repurpose best-performing content, and insights into unique channel requirements, to name a few.

Figure 9

"What DAM/PIM capabilities would be most valuable in helping your organization achieve its marketing priorities?"

70% Content measurement/engagement metrics tracking

68% Ability to securely access content where/when needed

59% Ability to repurpose best-performing content

55% Ability to understand unique requirements for new e-commerce channels

51% Ability to easily organize/find content and product data in a single system

Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
Note: Showing top 5 responses only
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

Key Recommendations

Forrester's in-depth survey of digital marketers and e-commerce decision-makers about brand and product content performance yielded several important recommendations:

Adopt PIM and DAM technologies to enable your customer experience architecture. PIM and DAM platforms work better together and are even more powerful when tightly integrated or combined. The two technologies build a foundation for brands to deliver approved, high-quality, and engaging content to omnichannel endpoints. PIM software provides the information needed to empower customers, with flexible hierarchy and taxonomies to align attributes to customer intent. A DAM solution powers the rich media that transforms this data into compelling experiences. As the foundation for your customer experience architecture, tightly integrated or combined DAM and PIM tools mean more accurate and empowered product data and faster time-to-market for that data.

Shift content management from a departmental-level to an enterprise-level strategy. We found that most organizations manage their content at the departmental level, which is a good start. But to harness speed, consistency, and reusability, advanced organizations need to manage content at the enterprise level. Leveraging enterprise-grade tools, these organizations create guardrails for their content via governance processes while also giving regions or business units the flexibility to create customizations and variants that will fit local markets.

Set up a plan to deliver personalized content across customer lifecycles and journeys. Brands think they're delivering personalization, but customers don't feel like they're receiving it. To address this, use customer journey mapping to first identify where the most critical content and information gaps are for your organization. Then, build your single, centralized repository that will house the individual assets and data to support your personalization efforts. Finally, enrich your content with metadata that instructs your people and technology on where to incorporate the content into the customer lifecycle.

Define your business metrics for content success. Marketing, sales, and customer service need to work together to define business-level metrics for success. We found that an overwhelming number of survey respondents focused on "vanity metrics" like page views when assessing content success, but organizations must go deeper to close the gap between current state and desired personalization goals. How did the content help customers self-serve, rather than call the contact center? How did rich media and product comparisons help drive conversions or increases in basket value? How do more granular attributes, combined with more images, help SEO rankings?

Empower your teams to embrace the shift. Misaligned metrics, assets disparately spread, and the lack of analytics are all frequently cited as obstacles to the execution of successful content strategies. But often addressing those challenges means making significant changes to how teams work and are measured. Proactively manage the change with training for new tools and reexamine teams' standards for collaboration, rewarding them based on how their work impacts the customer experience.

FORRESTER®

Appendix A: Methodology

In this study, Forrester conducted an online survey of 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers and 360 consumers in North America and Europe to evaluate brand and product content performance. Questions provided to the decision-maker participants asked about their organization's product content processes and strategies, and how it affects their performance in the eyes of their consumers. Questions provided to the consumer participants asked about their perceptions of brands' product content, in which they purchase from, and how they feel it resonates with their personal needs. Respondents were offered incentives, if applicable, as a thank you for time spent on the survey. The study was completed in March 2021.

Appendix B: Demographics/Data

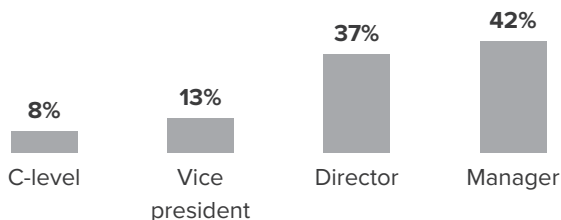## DEMOGRAPHICS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

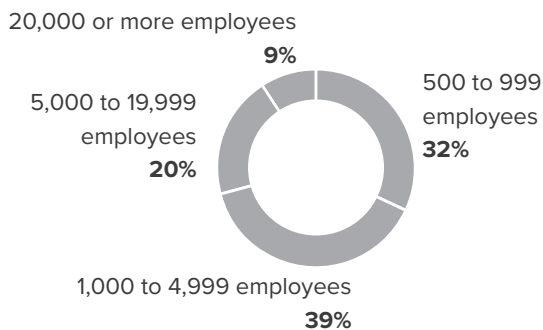### COUNTRY

North America: 59% of total
US: **47%**
Canada: **12%**

EMEA: 41% of total
UK: **19%**   France: **5%**
Nordics: **5%**   Switzerland: **4%**
Germany: **5%**   Netherlands: **4%**
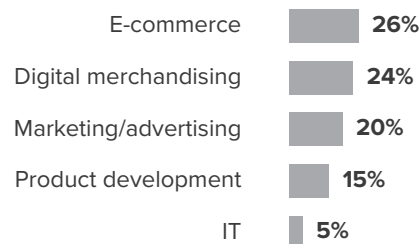
LEVEL

C-level	Vice president	Director	Manager
8%	13%	37%	42%

COMPANY SIZE

- 20,000 or more employees **9%**
- 5,000 to 19,999 employees **20%**
- 500 to 999 employees **32%**
- 1,000 to 4,999 employees **39%**

INDUSTRY

100% of respondents are in B2C organizations.

Industry	Total %
Retail	**20%**
Manufacturing & materials (industrial)	**20%**
Agriculture, food, beverage	**20%**
CPG/manufacturing	**19%**
Biotech/pharmaceuticals	**12%**
Medical technology/equipment	**8%**

Respondents had to have decision-making responsibility for either digital marketing strategy, product strategy, or e-commerce strategy in order to proceed.

DEPARTMENT
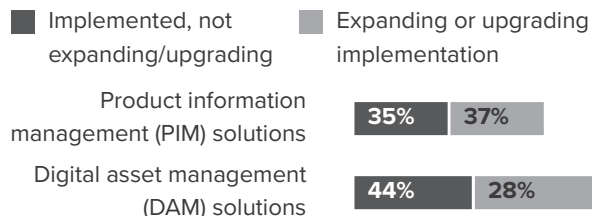
E-commerce	**26%**
Digital merchandising	**24%**
Marketing/advertising	**20%**
Product development	**15%**
IT	**5%**

DAM/PIM UTILIZATION

■ Implemented, not expanding/upgrading   ■ Expanding or upgrading implementation

	Implemented, not expanding/upgrading	Expanding or upgrading implementation
Product information management (PIM) solutions	**35%**	**37%**
Digital asset management (DAM) solutions	**44%**	**28%**

Base: 259 digital marketing/e-commerce decision-makers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

FORRESTER®

DEMOGRAPHICS FOR CONSUMERS

COUNTRY

North America: 58% of total
US: **50%**
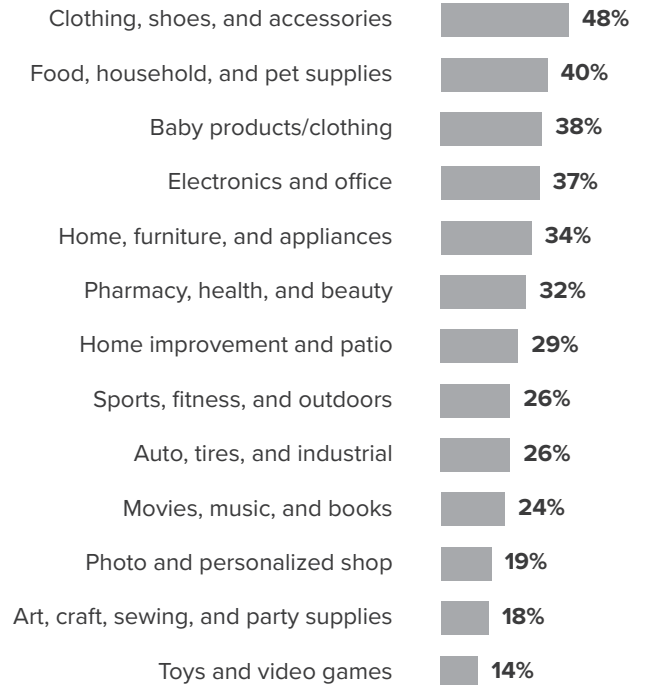Canada: **9%**

EMEA: 42% of total
UK: **23%**   France: **4%**
Nordics: **5%**   Switzerland: **3%**
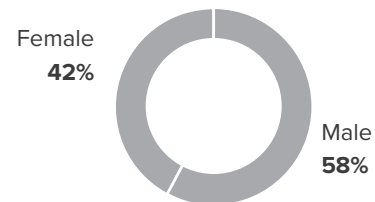Germany: **5%**   Netherlands: **2%**

Average age:
34 years

METHODS OF PURCHASE IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS

Online (via a brand's website) **100%**

Online (via a marketplace, e.g., Amazon) **44%**

In-store **35%**

Using a brand's mobile app **29%**

Using the shopping function on a social media app **17%**

CATEGORIES OF PURCHASE

Clothing, shoes, and accessories **48%**
Food, household, and pet supplies **40%**
Baby products/clothing **38%**
Electronics and office **37%**
Home, furniture, and appliances **34%**
Pharmacy, health, and beauty **32%**
Home improvement and patio **29%**
Sports, fitness, and outdoors **26%**
Auto, tires, and industrial **26%**
Movies, music, and books **24%**
Photo and personalized shop **19%**
Art, craft, sewing, and party supplies **18%**
Toys and video games **14%**

GENDER

Female
42%

Male
58%

Base: 360 consumers in NA and EMEA
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Widen an Acquia company, March 2021

Appendix C: Endnotes

[1] Source: "PIM And DAM Are The Power Couple For Your Content Strategy," Forrester Research, Inc., October 29, 2020.

[2] Respondents had to use either a DAM or PIM solution to qualify for the survey.

FORRESTER®