The Forrester Wave™: Product Information Management (PIM), Q2 2014
by Peter Sheldon and Michele Goetz, May 21, 2014

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Hybris (An SAP Company), IBM, Informatica, Riversand, And Stibo Systems Lead The Pack
Forrester’s research uncovered a market in which hybris (an SAP company), Informatica (Heiler), IBM, Riversand Technologies, and Stibo lead the pack. ADAM Software, Agility Multichannel, Enterworks, and inRiver offer competitive options. Asim lags behind.

The PIM Market Is Growing As Marketing Pros Exploit The Digital Business
Mobile, eCommerce, and online channels are where customers go to get information about products. Increasingly, marketing is going digital to be where customers are. To communicate accurate and consistent product information across an omnichannel landscape, they need a PIM solution to overcome the scale and complexity digital channels create.

Today’s PIM Buyers Are Primarily From The Business Side
Business users such as marketers, online merchandisers, and product managers are increasingly the driving force behind investment in PIM. They seek user-friendly tools that let them manage and approve finalized (marketing-ready) product information and content that can be syndicated to channel partners (such as online resellers) and used internally.

Access The Forrester Wave Model For Deeper Insight
Use the detailed Forrester Wave™ model to view every piece of data used to score participating vendors and create a custom vendor shortlist. Access the report online and download the Excel tool using the link in the right-hand column under “Tools & Templates.” Alter Forrester’s weightings to tailor the Forrester Wave model to your specifications.
The Forrester Wave™: Product Information Management (PIM), Q2 2014


by Peter Sheldon and Michele Goetz
with Zia Daniell Wigder and Rebecca Katz

WHY READ THIS REPORT

In Forrester’s 19-criteria evaluation of product information management (PIM) vendors, we identified the 10 most significant providers in the category — ADAM Software, Agility Multichannel, asim, Enterworks, hybris (an SAP company), IBM, Informatica, inRiver, Riversand Technologies, and Stibo Systems — and researched, analyzed, and scored them in three areas: current offering, strategy, and market presence. This report details our findings about how well each vendor fulfills our criteria and where they stand in relation to each other to help eBusiness and channel strategy professionals select the right partner for their product information management needs.

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Related Research Documents

The Forrester Wave™: Master Data Management Solutions, Q1 2014
February 3, 2014

Market Overview: Digital Asset Management, 2014
January 24, 2014

It’s Time To Revisit Product Information Management (PIM)
July 21, 2009
PIM IS AN IMPERATIVE FOR MANAGING A CUSTOMER-FACING PRODUCT STRATEGY

As consumers spend more time researching product purchases online, the importance of high-quality product content becomes paramount for retailers, manufacturers, CPG firms, and distributors alike. In fact, retailers are prioritizing the enhancement of online product content above other merchandising initiatives including personalization, product recommendations, and A/B testing. Why? Detailed product content is a differentiator when it comes to customer experience. Thirty percent of US online adults cite that they would consider buying from an online retailer they had never previously purchased from if the retailer offered detailed product information.

With customer demands for high-quality, consistent product information and content on the rise, a new breed of PIM buyers has emerged. They are the brand marketers, online merchandisers, and product owners responsible for the sales and marketing of finished merchandise to the customer. At many organizations today, these individuals all too often rely on manual processes and home-grown tools (commonly MS Excel) to manage the consolidation of product data from back-office systems and other disparate data sources across the enterprise. While these home-grown solutions may have served them well in the past, Forrester has observed a considerable uptick in client inquiries asking about how PIM solutions can replace this status quo. Furthermore, in a recent survey, 33% of eBusiness and channel strategy professionals cited that investment in PIM technology was a top priority. Although the buyer of a PIM solution is not always the same from client to client and the needs of a retailer can differ from those of an industrial manufacturer or CPG firm, Forrester has observed common scenarios that lead customer-obsessed organizations to invest in PIM. These include the need to:

- **Have a single view of trusted customer-facing product data.** Industrial, brand, and CPG firms that manufacture their own products have long invested in PIM (either standalone or as part of their ERP infrastructure) to manage buy-side supply-chain-related product data such as item dimensions and weights. However, the business side of the house also has a need for PIM. It needs a single repository for consumer-ready, trusted, and approved product content that can be made accessible across the enterprise to internal users (brand managers, marketing, account managers) and that also can be made accessible to external channel partners, such as retail distributors and resellers.

- **Reduce time-to-market for new product launches.** Product life cycles are getting shorter. Brands and retailers alike need to get new products quickly into the hands of customers, and this means streamlining the processes for creating, approving, publishing, and syndicating consumer-ready product content. Today manual processes hinder this goal, but with PIM, many stages of the product content creation life cycle can be automated.
Support larger product catalogs. Many retailers are increasing the number of SKUs they sell online by a factor of five to 10 times. The industry calls this the “endless aisle,” and for retailers it is a necessity to stay relevant in an era where Amazon sell almost every conceivable consumer merchandise category. Brands, too, are increasing the number of SKUs they offer with new sub-brands, private-label products, and general diversification of product lines. All of this means that existing home-grown product management systems and manual processes are bursting at the seams. PIM provides a scalable solution that enables firms to rapidly increase the SKUs and products they sell without having to worry about system scalability.

Support increasingly demanding channel distribution partners. From video and high-resolution imagery through to detailed product specs and even supply chain data, savvy online retailers like Amazon and Walmart are becoming increasingly demanding. The rules of the game are changing, and manufacturers, brands, and CPGs that want to distribute via these online channel powerhouses must play by their rules. PIM provides the governance and process orchestration tools needed to manage unique product content needs for individual channel partners as well as the tools to syndicate out product content in the required format and specifications defined in downstream channel partner trading agreements.

Ensure a consistent cross-channel customer experience. No matter which channel a product is being sold through, retailers and brands alike must ensure that customers receive a consistent experience. For example, CPG firms must ensure (often for the purposes of regulatory compliance) that their products have the correct and most up-to-date information across online retail sites, print catalogs, store displays, kiosks, and mobile. Failure to do so can often result in consumers being misled into buying the wrong products or products that do not meet their specified expectations, which in turn affects return rates, customer satisfaction, and brand advocacy metrics — and ultimately margin.

PIM IS FOR BUSINESS; MDM IS FOR TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Forrester often sees clients confused about what tools are best suited to manage the quality and consistency of product information. On the one hand, there are master data management tools. On the other, there are product information management tools. Each appears to solve the same set of challenges to manage product data, yet it becomes obvious during vendor demonstrations that these tools are very different. Business users such as marketers can readily identify with the application look and feel of product information management that offers an intuitive environment for managing product data and associated content. Data management professionals are drawn to master data management solutions that are obvious extensions to their data management tools, such as extract-transform-load (ETL), data quality, and metadata management, and help them with data integration demands. So how should organizations orient themselves to determine whether a PIM tool is the right choice? There are three options to consider (see Figure 1):
- **PIM pure-play.** This option is concerned with how product information is presented outwardly through sales and marketing channels (e.g., an online store). Business users need an application that maintains catalogs, bringing together the attributes of products with merchandising elements such as images, video, audio, descriptions, and bundles. PIM addresses the dynamic nature of constructing and reconstructing compelling packages and offers in an environment that nontechnical user can work in. Critical capabilities are product visualization, workflow management, discrete and mass product updates and refreshes, and seamless integration with content tools (content management, digital asset management, print, eCommerce, etc.) for product definitions/bundles and workflow.

- **MDM pure-play.** The management and orchestration of product data and elements across applications and data sources is the strength of master data management (MDM) tools. Where PIM may be the system of record for the outward view of product information, MDM manages the complexity of gathering product data, syndicating the data to other systems, and providing consistency and linkage of product data to other master data domains (i.e., customer, supplier, location, etc.). Linkage to content may be maintained in the form of metadata to link by a tag or file but it is not presented natively within the MDM tool. From a user standpoint, the environment is typically oriented for technology management, although data professionals in business operations are also common users. Critical capabilities are data integration, multidomain data modeling, data quality and matching, data governance, metadata management, and multiplatform support (i.e., RDBMS, Hadoop/NoSQL, applications, etc.).

- **Hybrid PIM/MDM solution.** Many PIM vendors offer their own MDM standalone tools or have MDM capabilities integrated into their PIM tools. This is due to the fact that a mature PIM capability within a complex omnichannel ecosystem requires a front-end business solution and a robust back-end engine. PIM vendors may present their tools as MDM for other domains, as PIM will often contain non-product data such as supplier information. However, the nature of the environment is optimized for a product view and product management workflows. Forrester recommends that organizations use their MDM tools as the engine and orchestration point across multiple domains and include PIM as the business application for business users to manage the product catalog(s) (see Figure 2).

Yes, you can model products in an MDM solution, but the tool set is not well suited for business users (brand marketers, product managers), plus PIM solutions have a niche set of capabilities tailored to the specifics of managing products (e.g., product relationships).
**Figure 1** PIM Looks And Feels Like MDM, But It’s Really An App

| Acronym: PIM | Stands for: Product information management | Is defined as: An enterprise application enabling an organization to identify or derive trusted product data across heterogeneous data environments, enabling transactional, bidirectional synchronization across upstream production sources, downstream analytical target systems, and external trading communities and data sync networks | And manages these product life-cycle processes: 1) Validate and source; 2) market and promote; 3) produce and sell; 4) support and retire. |

| Acronym: Product MDM | Stands for: Product master data management | Is defined as: A business capability specifically focused on identifying trusted product data and then leveraging that data to improve product-data-dependent business processes and decisions | And manages these product life-cycle processes: Validate only. A product master in an MDM hub will not automate the other PLM processes as defined above. It will only validate the single version of truth for product data and synchronize that truth with the applications that manage these dependent upstream and downstream processes. |

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.
PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (PIM) EVALUATION OVERVIEW

To assess the state of the PIM market and see how the vendors stack up against each other, Forrester evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of 10 leading PIM vendors. After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we developed a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria. We evaluated vendors against 19 criteria, which we grouped into three high-level buckets:

- **Current offering.** The criteria we selected to assess the strength of companies’ current offerings reflect the needs of both eBusiness and enterprise architecture professionals — i.e., we included technical integration and systems governance criteria alongside criteria that evaluated the effectiveness of the business user tools for end users. We evaluated each offering against nine groups of criteria: architecture and scalability; integration and syndication; workflow, approval, and business process support; product taxonomy and relationship management; product attribute management; roles and privileges; administration tools; vendor portal tools; and data quality management, governance, and reporting.
Strategy. We compared the strategies of each company with the needs of eBusiness and enterprise architecture executives, industry trends, and Forrester’s forward-looking vision of the PIM market to assess how well each vendor is positioned for future success. We examined each vendor’s road map, planned product enhancements, target market, focus on PIM, key technology partners, implementation providers, and cost of ownership.

Market presence. Many firms today support their PIM needs with home-grown technology or legacy solutions no longer supported by the vendor community. eBusiness and enterprise architecture executives must look for vendors that have a strong and stable installed base, demonstrate steady growth, and offer a solid network of implementation and supports partners. To determine the current market presence for our evaluation, we combined information about each vendor’s installed base, new customers, revenue, revenue growth, global presence, and vertical market penetration.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA

In this Forrester Wave, Forrester evaluated vendors that offer standalone PIM solutions targeted at distributors, retailers, CPG, and manufacturing firms. Forrester included 10 vendors in the assessment: ADAM Software, Agility Multichannel, asim, Enterworks, hybris (an SAP company), IBM, Informatica, inRiver, Riversand Technologies, and Stibo Systems (see Figure 3). Although PIM capabilities are sometimes found embedded within other software product categories (e.g., ERP systems), only the 10 vendors included in this evaluation have:

- An established enterprise PIM offering. A participating player must actively market a productized PIM solution. The vendor must have initially released the product version included in the evaluation prior to October 2013.

- A standalone offering for PIM. Beyond the ability to support product data in a broader MDM solution or within an ERP or eCommerce platform, these vendors offer standalone PIM enterprise applications with unique capabilities that allow them to validate and source, market and promote, produce and sell, and support and retire products.

- A focused product road map. Each of the vendors evaluated has a focused product road map that aligns with the direction of the market and emerging scenarios tracked by Forrester.

- Mindshare among the Forrester client base. The vendors we evaluated are frequently mentioned in Forrester client inquiries, shortlists, consulting projects, and case studies.

- A focus on retail, distribution, CPG, and manufacturing verticals. Beyond the ability to support product data in a broader MDM solution, these vendors have rich support for the unique needs of retailers, distributors, CPG firms, and manufacturers.
### Figure 3 Evaluated Vendors: Vendor Information And Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Product Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADAM Software</td>
<td>Product Content Management (PCM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agility Multichannel</td>
<td>Agility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asim</td>
<td>asimSuite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterworks</td>
<td>Enable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hybris</td>
<td>Master Data Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>InfoSphere Master Data Management Collaborative Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informatica</td>
<td>Informatica PIM (Product Information Management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inRiver</td>
<td>inRiver PIM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riversand Technologies</td>
<td>Product Information Management (PIM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stibo Systems</td>
<td>STEP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Vendor selection criteria

**An established enterprise PIM offering.** A participating player must actively market a productized PIM solution. The vendor must have initially released the product version included in the evaluation prior to October 2013.

**A standalone offering for PIM.** Beyond the ability to support product data in a broader MDM solution or within an ERP or eCommerce platform, these vendors offer standalone PIM enterprise applications with unique capabilities that allow them to validate and source, market and promote, produce and sell, and support and retire products.

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**A focus on retail, distribution, CPG, and manufacturing verticals.** Beyond the ability to support product data in a broader MDM solution, these vendors have rich support for the unique needs of retailers, distributors, CPG firms, and manufacturers.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.
PIM LEADERS EXCELSAT OMNICHANNEL MANAGEMENT AND ORCHESTRATION

The evaluation uncovered a market in which (see Figure 4):

- **Hybris (an SAP company), IBM, Informatica, Riversand, and Stibo Systems lead the pack.** These vendors have all been in the PIM game for over a decade, and consequently all five bring to the table a robust and comprehensive set of capabilities. They each seamlessly balance the requirements to manage product data to acquire, retain, and grow customers while addressing the underlying complexity of product data quality, consistency, and omnichannel orchestration. Furthermore, all of them either offer robust integration with their own eCommerce solutions or have strong partnerships in place with the leading eCommerce platform vendors.

- **ADAM Software, Agility Multichannel, Enterworks, and inRiver offer competitive options.** Each of these vendors offers unique PIM capabilities for clients. Their strengths are oriented toward the front-end business capabilities marketers have for catalog management. However, their offerings are often focused on particular industries, channels, or size of catalogs. These vendors typically lack more robust data quality, integration, and master data management capabilities and thus are commonly a right-size fit for midmarket retailers, distributors, or manufacturers that need to empower their digital marketing and brand teams to manage a single view of trusted product data, but where a smaller user base reduces the need for highly complex approval workflows and governance enforcement.

- **Asim lags behind.** Asim is a niche solution targeted primarily at industrial manufacturers. The solution suffers from a number of limitations but may be a fit for manufacturers looking to manage a complex taxonomy of parts.

This evaluation of the PIM market is intended to be a starting point only. We encourage clients to view detailed product evaluations and adapt criteria weightings to fit their individual needs through the Forrester Wave Excel-based vendor comparison tool.
Figure 4 Forrester Wave™: Product Information Management (PIM), Q2 '14

Go to Forrester.com to download the Forrester Wave tool for more detailed product evaluations, feature comparisons, and customizable rankings.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.
**Figure 4** Forrester Wave™: Product Information Management (PIM), Q2 ’14 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT OFFERING</th>
<th>Forrester’s Weighting</th>
<th>ADAM Software</th>
<th>Agility Multichannel</th>
<th>asim</th>
<th>Entersworks</th>
<th>hybris</th>
<th>IBM</th>
<th>Informatica</th>
<th>iRiver</th>
<th>Riversa Technologies</th>
<th>Stibo Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and scalability</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration and syndication</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workflow, approval, and business process support</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product taxonomy and relationship management</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product attribute management</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles and privileges</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>4.40</td>
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<td>4.40</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration tools</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>4.20</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor portal tools</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data quality management, governance, and reporting</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| STRATEGY                                              | 50%                   | 3.30          | 3.10                 | 2.00| 2.90        | 4.70  | 4.10  | 4.40        | 3.00 | 3.50                 | 4.40         |
| Product road map and strategic direction              | 40%                   | 4.00          | 3.00                 | 2.00| 3.00        | 5.00  | 3.00  | 4.00        | 3.00 | 4.00                 | 4.00         |
| Target market and enterprise track record             | 30%                   | 2.00          | 3.00                 | 2.00| 3.00        | 5.00  | 5.00  | 5.00        | 2.00 | 3.00                 | 5.00         |
| Partner network, professional services, and vendor-provided services | 20%   | 4.00          | 3.00                 | 2.00| 2.00        | 4.00  | 5.00  | 5.00        | 4.00 | 3.00                 | 5.00         |
| Solution implementation                              | 10%                   | 3.00          | 4.00                 | 2.00| 4.00        | 4.00  | 4.00  | 4.00        | 3.00 | 4.00                 | 3.00         |
| Cost of ownership                                     | 0%                    | 4.00          | 4.00                 | 4.00| 4.00        | 4.00  | 4.00  | 4.00        | 4.00 | 3.00                 | 2.00         |

| MARKET PRESENCE                                       | 0%                    | 1.75          | 2.70                 | 2.00| 2.10        | 4.15  | 4.40  | 4.00        | 4.00 | 3.00                 | 2.90 4.55    |
| Revenue                                               | 30%                   | 2.00          | 2.00                 | 2.00| 2.00        | 4.00  | 4.00  | 4.00        | 2.00 | 3.00                 | 5.00         |
| Revenue growth                                         | 15%                   | 3.00          | 4.00                 | 3.00| 3.00        | 4.00  | 4.00  | 4.00        | 5.00 | 5.00                 | 4.00         |
| Customer base                                          | 25%                   | 1.00          | 3.00                 | 2.00| 3.00        | 4.00  | 5.00  | 4.00        | 3.00 | 2.00                 | 5.00         |
| New customers (past 12 months)                        | 15%                   | 1.00          | 2.00                 | 1.00| 0.00        | 4.00  | 5.00  | 4.00        | 4.00 | 2.00                 | 4.00         |
| Geographic and vertical market penetration             | 15%                   | 2.00          | 3.00                 | 2.00| 2.00        | 4.00  | 5.00  | 4.00        | 2.00 | 3.00                 | 4.00         |

All scores are based on a scale of 0 (weak) to 5 (strong).

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.
VENDOR PROFILES

Leaders

- **Hybris (an SAP company).** Though best known as a commerce provider, hybris started life as a PIM solution, with commerce capabilities added later in the product evolution. Today, hybris continues to offer PIM as a standalone offering, although many clients purchase licenses for both the PIM and eCommerce modules together. Unlike the other PIM vendors included in this Forrester Wave that have partnerships with eCommerce platforms, hybris is unique in having a combined and tightly integrated PIM/eCommerce offering that is built on the same flexible Java architecture and data model. Hybris therefore appeals to manufacturers, CPG firms, and retailers that have both PIM and eCommerce project priorities. The combined solution negates the need to develop bespoke integrations and provides a strong set of business user tools (the hybris PIM cockpit) focused on supporting the needs of business-focused, merchandising, eCommerce, and marketing roles. Now part of SAP, the hybris PIM will complement SAP’s own enterprise information management (EIM) portfolio, and going forward, hybris PCM will become SAP’s strategic product catalog solution. The firm is already developing productized integrations between the hybris product content management (PCM) product and SAP’s own master data governance and PIM solutions. These integrations will intentionally be loosely coupled to allow for customer-specific implementations.

- **IBM.** IBM’s PIM solution dates back to the acquisition of Trigo Technologies in 2004. Today the firm offers both MDM/PIM capabilities under the umbrella of its Infosphere MDM solution set, with the PIM-specific capabilities available through both the Collaborative Edition and the Enterprise Edition. For prospective clients that are looking to IBM to fulfill both PIM and eCommerce requirements, the company offers a bundled integration package, Advanced Catalog Management (ACM), which provides prebuilt data model mapping and workflow integrations between InfoSphere MDM (CE) and WebSphere Commerce. However, clients should be aware that the business user tools are not integrated. The UI is dated, and while it offers powerful functionality for super users or data stewards, business-facing or external users may require training. IBM has a global and experienced suite of PIM implementation partners, as well as solution and technology partners that provide vertical-specific capabilities and accelerators to the core platform. Beyond the core verticals of retail, distribution, and manufacturing, IBM has a solid installed base among financial services, telecom, and healthcare firms that primarily sell services rather than physical goods.

- **Informatica.** Informatica purchased Heiler in late 2012 and immediately focused on the integration of Informatica Data Quality and on extending Heiler’s deployment options. Working with an already strong foundation to manage product taxonomies and relationships, Informatica PIM has one of the most complete sets of deployment, quality, and data management capabilities for PIM. Solid visualization, complex catalog management with inheritance, and strong workflow capabilities help business users create, manage, and govern product data.
Informatica PIM workflow is extensive and can be further deployed upstream and downstream using Informatica BPM. Linking product data with content and assets supports merchandising. Informatica PIM does a nice job of capturing events and detailed metadata for product changes, although it is lighter on an audit trail for business process, vendor management, and business performance. Overall, the reason customers choose Informatica PIM is its usability to support a multichannel environment.

- **Riversand Technologies.** Riversand customers have an extensive array of deployment options for complex multichannel environments. Product information can be configured and controlled to match any display option from mobile, eCommerce, print, email, or SEO, to name a few. In addition, data quality runs in the delivery process and notifies product teams and merchandisers of errors or issues. Riversand is highly scalable to support a large number of users and offers a wide set of language options. The solution has a tightly integrated DAM with embedded image/video editing and rendering features. Customers also appreciate the ability to bulk-load and manipulate product data, although some reported challenges with integration setup and business workflow rules design. However, customers indicate that Riversand is highly responsive and partners well. It works to resolve issues in production and evolve its product in alignment with customers' PIM needs and challenges.

- **Stibo Systems.** Stibo excels in integration with real-time systems, providing a multitude of transport and format options. Web service APIs based on SOAP and REST come out of the box and stay tightly coordinated with data model changes. Workflow management and tracking is standard to support the creation of product catalogs and requires more support from technology management. However, business users can receive Smart Excel files to make changes and added product data and attributes that integrate with the PIM solution. Customers appreciate the experience and responsiveness of Stibo to help with the technology as well as best practices to manage and govern product data. Stibo rapidly deploys new functionality to meet market demands; customers have also said that updates are sometimes so frequent that it is difficult to keep up. In general, customers are happy that they could start small with Stibo, and the solution scales well as the volume of products increases.

**Strong Performers**

- **ADAM Software.** New to the PIM market, ADAM Software builds upon its history as a digital asset management (DAM) vendor and plays on the strength of display merchandising to support catalog and eCommerce objectives. Customer feedback indicates this has created a superior user interface to move back and forth between PIM and DAM. Deployment options are extensive across the Microsoft server environment, Amazon EC2, and flexible integration with SSIS. The environment is clean and business-friendly, with business users able to view and navigate through products and build offers on their own. Emphasis on support for merchandising and marketing features has overshadowed investment in the data quality, bulk
update, and product detail import feeds. This has created customer challenges when products have an extensive number of attributes to manage. References cited that search and the user interface could be improved. ADAM Software does not currently offer portal capabilities, but suggests using RESTful APIs to connect with web portals or integrate with business process management services. Overall, ADAM Software’s PIM strength is the ability to support the preparation of product information at the point of engagement with customers with little to no support from technology management, making it a true business solution, not just a data management solution.

■ Agility Multichannel. Unlike other vendors, Agility Multichannel positions its software, Agility, as a PIM pure-play rather than a hybrid PIM/MDM solution. For customers with complex data integration needs that may be looking for heavyweight MDM functionality, the firm’s integrated OEM relationship with Pentaho solves for both data integration and business analytics. At the heart of the Agility offering is the user interface Agility Modular Interface (AMI), which can be highly customized for the specific needs of various end users through the creation of role-specific workspaces. The product ships with a library of widgets that allow for individual roles (e.g., product managers, online merchandisers, and suppliers) to design optimized workflows from a single web-based tool set. Agility Multichannel is already working with partners to build a development ecosystem around AMI that will see third-party widgets added to the library in due course. The solution is well suited for firms that need to syndicate product content to multiple channels and includes integration with Adobe’s Creative Cloud for print as well as mature connectors for most of the leading eCommerce platforms.

■ Enterworks. Business users have a friendly environment to manage product hierarchies, offers, and content, including digital asset management capabilities. The portal offers a complete workbench that provides visibility into the state and quality of product data and workflows. Additionally, business users are able to configure product attributes and taxonomies without technology management and do so across multiple catalogs maintaining inheritance. Customers cited the importance of changing how they thought about the product data from consumption to data structure by assessing their product data model before starting the implementation (we also heard this from other vendor references). Robust search capabilities make finding and managing products easy. Users can search using full text, faceted search, or filters and run side-by-side comparisons. For common searches, these can be saved and reused at the personal and global level. Clients cited that support and overall quality of the relationship were of a high standard.

■ inRiver. Sweden-based inRiver has a strong installed base of European retailer and distribution clients and is now expanding into the US market, having recently opened a sales office in Chicago. The solution is based on a Microsoft stack and offers a strong set of prebuilt connectors to popular eCommerce, print, and web content management (WCM) solutions with strategic technology partnerships in place. The solution offers robust tools for configurable workflows within the user interface, and the inRiver connect module provides a natively embedded data
quality engine that elevates the need for third-party MDM or data quality integrations. For an emerging vendor, inRiver already has an impressive network of implementation partners, with a significant portion of license revenues driven by partner-led opportunities. However, customer feedback highlighted that some partners lack deep knowledge of the platform’s capabilities.

**Contenders**

- **Asim.** Asim is a small vendor with a core installed base of industrial manufacturing firms in its home market of Germany, although the firm also counts Swiss and Austrian clients. The solution does a good job of enforcing data product data consistency; however, it lacks the flexibility compared to the other solutions evaluated to adapt or modify process workflows. Clients reported that the business tools — despite offering many power user capabilities — require a significant aspect of training for business-focused or new users to grasp.

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL**

**Online Resource**

The online version of Figure 4 is an Excel-based vendor comparison tool that provides detailed product evaluations and customizable rankings.

**Data Sources Used In This Forrester Wave**

Forrester used a combination of three data sources to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each solution:

- **Vendor surveys.** Forrester surveyed vendors on their capabilities as they relate to the evaluation criteria. Once we analyzed the completed vendor surveys, we conducted vendor calls where necessary to gather details of vendor qualifications.

- **Product demos.** We asked vendors to conduct demonstrations of their product’s functionality. We used findings from these product demos to validate details of each vendor’s product capabilities.

- **Customer reference calls.** To validate product and vendor qualifications, Forrester also conducted reference calls with up to two of each vendor’s current customers.
The Forrester Wave Methodology

We conduct primary research to develop a list of vendors that meet our criteria to be evaluated in this market. From that initial pool of vendors, we then narrow our final list. We choose these vendors based on: 1) product fit; 2) customer success; and 3) Forrester client demand. We eliminate vendors that have limited customer references and products that don’t fit the scope of our evaluation.

After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we develop the initial evaluation criteria. To evaluate the vendors and their products against our set of criteria, we gather details of product qualifications through a combination of lab evaluations, questionnaires, demos, and/or discussions with client references. We send evaluations to the vendors for their review, and we adjust the evaluations to provide the most accurate view of vendor offerings and strategies.

We set default weightings to reflect our analysis of the needs of large user companies — and/or other scenarios as outlined in the Forrester Wave document — and then score the vendors based on a clearly defined scale. These default weightings are intended only as a starting point, and we encourage readers to adapt the weightings to fit their individual needs through the Excel-based tool. The final scores generate the graphical depiction of the market based on current offering, strategy, and market presence. Forrester intends to update vendor evaluations regularly as product capabilities and vendor strategies evolve. For more information on the methodology that every Forrester Wave follows, go to http://www.forrester.com/marketing/policies/forrester-wave-methodology.html.

Integrity Policy

All of Forrester’s research, including Forrester Waves, is conducted according to our Integrity Policy. For more information, go to http://www.forrester.com/marketing/policies/integrity-policy.html.

ENDNOTES

1 Seventy-two percent of retailers in 2013 planned initiatives to improve video, photography, and product descriptions on their product detail pages. For more information, see the July 30, 2013, “The State Of Retailing Online 2013: Marketing And Merchandising” report.


3 For more information, please see the July 25, 2013, “Commerce Technology Investment And Platform Trends — 2013” report.
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