



# The Ultimate PIM Buyer's Guide

How to Select the Right System



# Who Should Read This Ebook



As an ecommerce retailer, you know that customers return products. It's just a fact of life.

But when almost *half* of them make those returns because the product they ended up with **didn't match the description** you gave them, there's an obvious opportunity for improvement.

And that improvement won't only pay off in the warm and fuzzies you'll get after creating a better customer experience because, right now, **poor product information management (PIM) is costing you big time.**

Product content experts at **Qurated** conducted research finding that over 40% of customers have returned an online purchase due to inaccuracies in the product description. In addition, someone on your team is spending 25 minutes per SKU, per year just manually keeping product information up to date.

That's costing you for every invoice that needs to be reconciled—which unfortunately includes about half of your invoices if you aren't using PIM.

However, companies that implement PIM software can **reduce time and get their products to market 6 times faster and increase sales by up to 50 percent.** You can also experience as many as **23 percent fewer returns, and drop customer inquiries by 27 percent.** Not only does this boost in sales and reduction in returns have an immediate impact on your revenue, just imagine what effective PIM could mean for labor productivity, new product and partnership opportunities, and customer loyalty.

More and more companies are flocking to PIM to differentiate themselves as consumers take their shopping online. And they trust PIM solutions

to empower them to create, enrich, govern, and deliver high-quality product content with cloud technology, smart automation, rapid time-to-value, and enterprise-level scalability.

**This guide is for online brands and retailers who are ready to take the plunge into PIM software.** In it, we'll do our best to help you understand why PIM matters, how it can benefit you, what features to look for and questions to ask when you're shopping PIM software, and how to compare some of the top PIM providers.

Whether you choose to invest in Plytix's user-friendly and affordable **PIM software** or one of the other options on the market—we're always on call to help you **unlock the power of your products.**

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# What is PIM?

Product information management (PIM) is the practice of **collecting, centralizing, refining, maintaining, and often distributing all the consumer-facing information and data needed to successfully market and sell products.**

If you haven't heard of PIM, it's likely you've at least heard of a similar practice like master data management (MDM), product lifecycle management (PLM), or product resource management (PRM).

While it's not important what your organization calls it, it is important that you have a PIM system in place if you're trying to make it in today's tough digital retail market.

In fact, American market research company Forrester says digital businesses are now attaching as many as 200 attributes to every single product. In what the report calls a

"content arms race," the winner will be the one who can keep millions of attributes fresh, unique, and accurate across dozens of advertising platforms, websites, and more.

PIM software empowers retailers to make ecommerce easier by providing a single source of truth from which their entire team can collect always-accurate product information and assets to enrich and optimize distribution across sales and marketing channels.

PIM software may store almost any information pertaining to a product, including the description, pricing, configuration, shipping, logistics, taxation, reviews, and more. And good PIM software (which we'll dive into later) can help your team organize product information in nearly endless configurations to provide a better experience for marketers, merchants, and customers.

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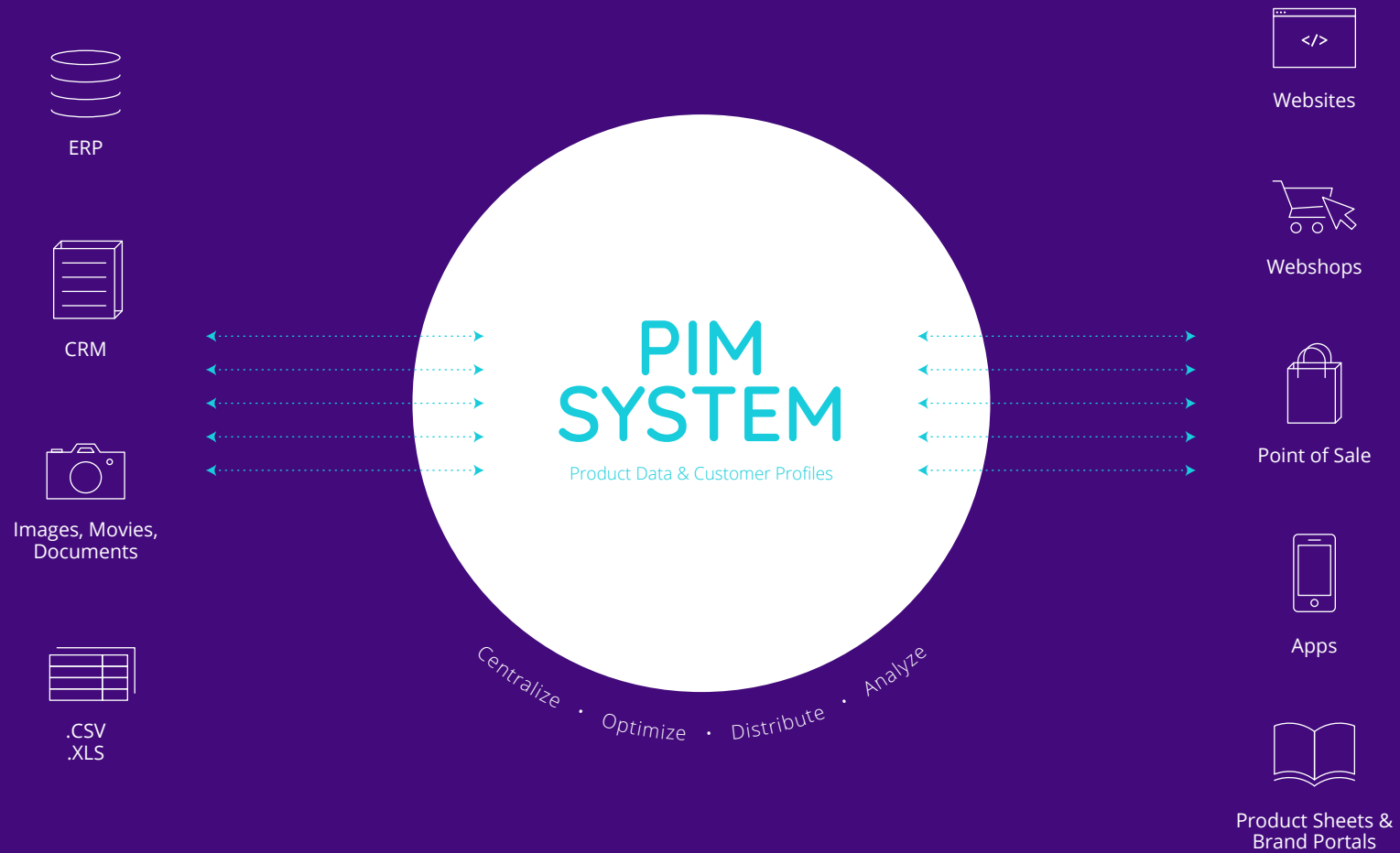
"Digital businesses are now attaching as many as 200 attributes to every single product."

- *The Forrester Wave™*

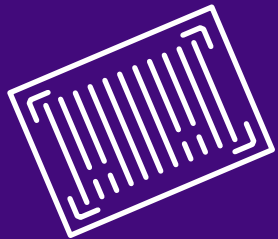
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# What is a PIM System?

A central data hub for all Sales and Marketing channels



# Why Do I Need a PIM System?



There's no doubt that today's retailers need a digital way to organize their product information. That's because, without it, marketing people, salespeople, and any other people involved in keeping consumer-facing product info up to date spend way too much time manually updating hundreds (or thousands) of product descriptions across dozens of platforms—all while hoping the info in the “2021\_products\_Ron's edit\_FINAL V3 REALLY THIS IS THE FINAL\_Leslie's changes X2” spreadsheet is actually up to date.

Manual, time-consuming practices like this make it impossible for online brands and retailers to keep up with the growing demands of ecommerce.

Speaking of growing demands, [the number of digital buyers is at 2.64 billion. This makes up 33.3% of the population worldwide](#)—a 3.1% year-over-year increase. Not only does that mean more competitors and more products are coming online every day, it also means shoppers are expecting you to step up your game.

While companies of all sizes can benefit from [practicing good PIM](#), it's essential that you look into a software solution if you...

- Manage complex product content and relationships
- Offer a high number of SKUs (a “high number” being way more than your team can keep up to date manually)
- Sell products and/or advertise via multiple channels
- Collect data from multiple suppliers
- Need to provide accurate product information to multiple teams or people
- Already have too many manual processes in place
- Expand or transition product offering multiple times a year

# How Will I Benefit from Using PIM Software?

When you look at the entire lifecycle of a product, there's a **ton of data** supporting most of your offerings, including:

- **Essential product data:** *SKUs, UPCs, names, titles, descriptions, etc.*
- **Taxonomy and relationships:** *categories, labels, variations, etc.*
- **Technical specs:** *measurements, materials, ingredients, warranties, etc.*
- **Digital assets:** *images, videos, documents, etc.*
- **Marketing data:** *keywords, personas, SEO elements, etc.*
- **Sales info:** *prices, testimonials, customer reviews, etc.*
- **Design specs:** *style sheets, designer notes, assembly instructions, etc.*
- **Channel-specific info:** *Google categories, Amazon titles, mobile descriptions, etc.*
- **Localized info:** *multilingual copy, translations, etc.*
- **Production data:** *supplier, manufacturer, etc.*





## CONTINUED | HOW WILL I BENEFIT FROM USING PIM?

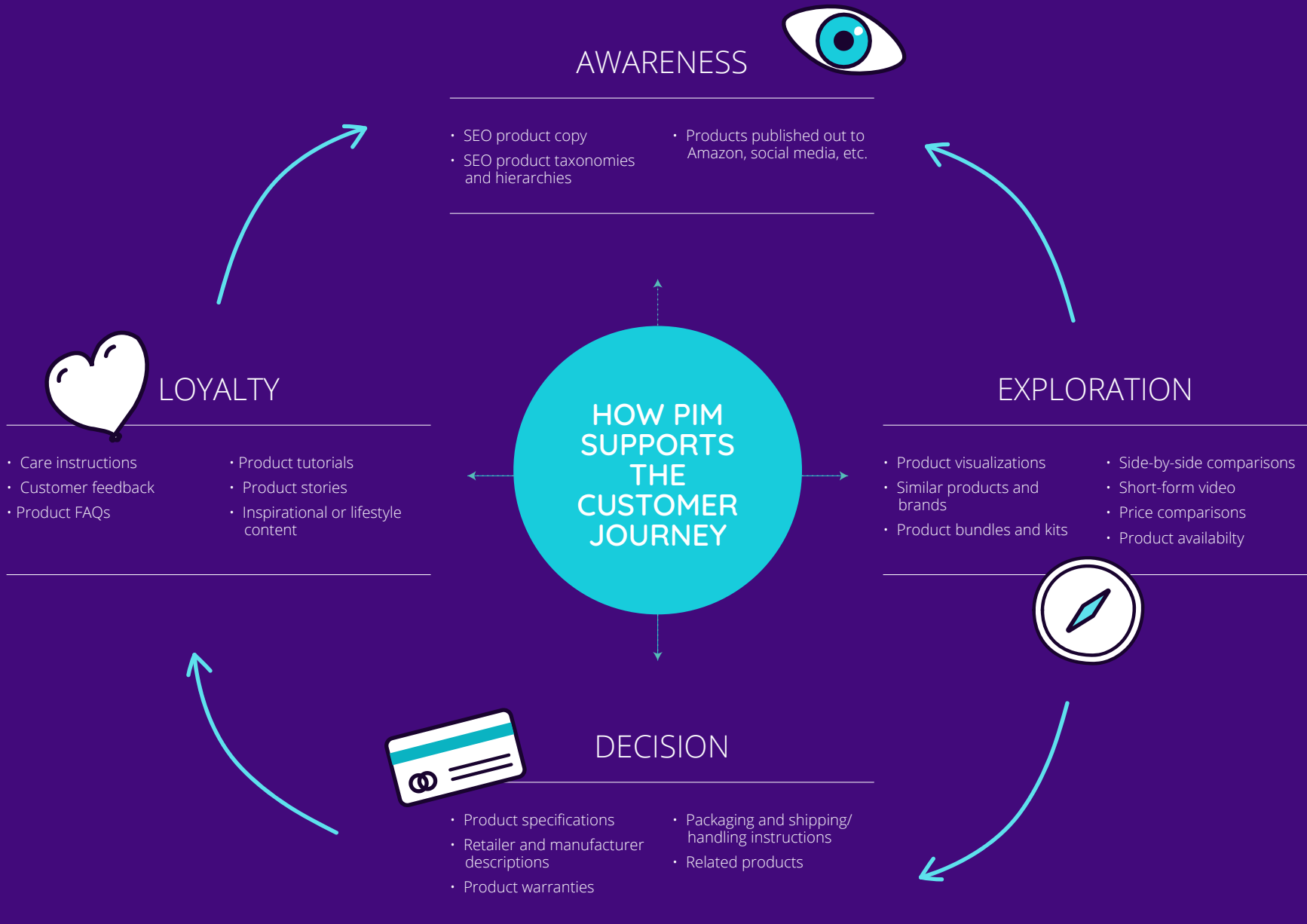
The **biggest issue** online retailers face is keeping all of this data intact across multiple channels with both accuracy and efficiency. Manual systems and out-of-date, over-built product management tools only allow you to achieve one or the other—accuracy or efficiency.

A modern, user-friendly PIM solution should have what you need to streamline product information

management so your team can ramp up their productivity, impress customers with awesome data quality, and take back their time to do some of that marketing and sales they were actually hired to do. Plus, it should be able to interact easily with other systems to serve as an accurate repository where you can easily send internal and external stakeholders to find the latest product info.







## CONTINUED | HOW WILL I BENEFIT FROM USING PIM?

With a PIM system like that, the benefits can be profound. When it comes to dealing with all the incoming, outgoing, cross-department, and multi-channel product information; [check out all the benefits PIM software can have on workflow, sales, data, and more:](#)

- Reduce errors and redundancies by relying on a single source of truth
- Eliminate manual data input and updating
- Integrate data from multiple sources and channels—in multiple formats
- Quickly export optimized product info to the right sales channels and platforms to get to market faster than your competitors
- Reduce overhead and wasted resources with data accuracy and consistency
- Eliminate bottlenecks and data silos
- Create rich, consistent content optimized for all your sales channels
- Sell more with better content and accessible data
- Expand product offering in a sustainable way
- Import and sort supplier data quickly
- Increase customer satisfaction and loyalty with quality, up-to-the-minute product content



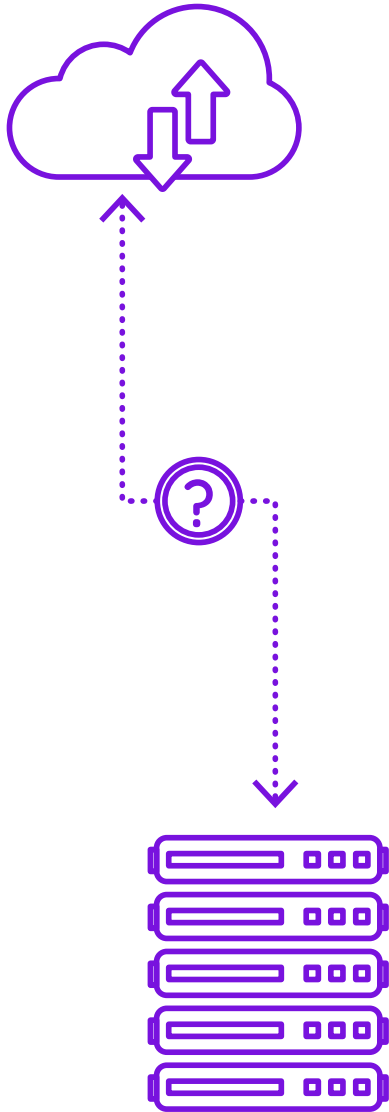
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## YOUR WHOLE TEAM CAN BENEFIT FROM PIM SOFTWARE

The benefits don't stop at what PIM can do—here's [who on your team](#) can benefit!

Easy-to-use PIM software gives **sales teams** accurate product data and materials they can access on the go. **Ecommerce managers** are able to keep products up to date to improve conversion rates while **customer support representatives** can access information with ease to ensure accurate service. **Marketing teams** will have one less thing to juggle and, perhaps best of all, **your customers** will be empowered to buy with confidence knowing your brand continues to provide quality information (and products!) they can rely on.

# 10 Questions You Should Ask When Selecting A PIM System



In order for your PIM project to have a successful impact on your business, you can't just invest in the technology without asking the right questions to ensure it aligns with your goals and the processes you're willing to create or reshape to make PIM work for your unique needs.

*Ask these questions to define what you want from a PIM solution, what good product management looks like to you, and what you need to do to achieve it:*

## 1. What do I want my PIM system to achieve?

For PIM to impact overall business goals, it's important to develop key performance indicators to keep your PIM integration on track. These KPIs can vary widely by company, but they might look something like:

- Aligning all products across all channels by X date

- Reduce time to market by X percent
- Reduce time spent updating product content by X percent
- Establishing an easy onboarding process for products on each channel

## 2. Is the PIM system on-site or on the cloud?

On-premise PIM systems have to be hosted on your own computer or server—a requirement that smaller organizations without a well-rounded IT team might not be able to meet. [Cloud-based PIM](#) offered as software as a service (SaaS) is centrally hosted and can be accessed on demand via a browser.

## CONTINUED | 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING A PIM SYSTEM

### 3. Does the PIM system come with standard or customizable exports?

Standard exports are connections with distribution channels that help map your product data to their specifications. They're common among digital PIM systems. But if your company uses unique naming conventions and fields, you might want to seek out a PIM system with customizable exports.

Customizable exports offer a little more flexibility and control. They allow your PIM system to adapt your data naming and formatting while still successfully exporting product data to different channels.

### 4. Will the PIM system allow me to upload and manage digital assets?

If you want to be able to keep data and images linked to the right product, choose a PIM system that comes with asset management. This will be especially important when media-heavy

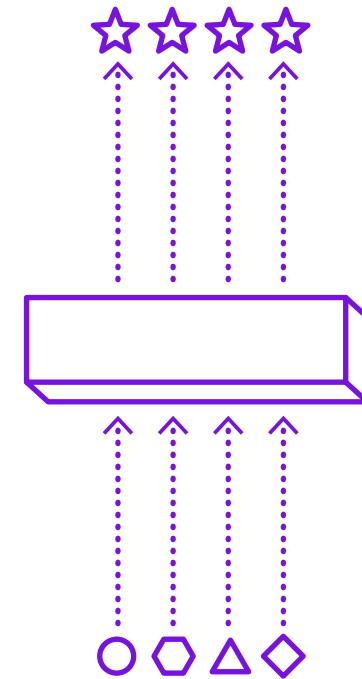
product descriptions are key to winning conversions.

### 5. What types of support packages are offered with this PIM tool?

Support levels can range from a DIY knowledge base to responsive live support. If you're new to PIM software—and *especially* if you're new to PIM practices altogether—be sure to choose the level of support you'll need during the setup and maintenance of your tool.

### 6. Where do I publish and distribute product data?

The more channels, formats, and languages in which you need to publish your content—the greater the case for a PIM system that's easy for your whole team to use. Be sure when choosing that it's capable of handling apps, email marketing, and any other channels upon which you wish to distribute.



### 7. Where do I get product data from?

Kind of like the last question, you want to take stock of all the sources from which your data comes. This will help ensure the PIM system you choose is capable of handling all your sources without causing your team to have to do a bunch of manual rewriting and entry.

## CONTINUED | 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING A PIM SYSTEM

### 8. How complex is my product information?

It's not about the number of products—many PIM systems can handle a ton of those—it's about how complex the data around them is. Do your products come with a lot of information? Is the structure of that information important to maintain? Are the products highly configurable? The more complex your product info, the more careful you should be that the PIM system you choose allows your team to manage it efficiently.

### 9. What workflows does PIM need to support and what processes can I develop to maximize its success?

Now that you have a tool that can actually handle a product content production and distribution workflow, it's time to take a look at the way you've been doing things to determine what needs to change and what processes can be adapted to make the most of

your new PIM system. New use cases and processes will very likely develop as you continue along the path to PIM enlightenment, but these fundamental considerations will give you a starting point:

- Who should interact with product information?
- What should they be able to do?
- How should they be able to do it?
- When should they be able to do it?

### 10. How closely does my PIM system need to integrate with my ERP?

Much like PIM, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems use a singular database to store various types of data throughout an entire company. If you're already using an ERP system, it's likely you've been thinking about how, and how closely, to integrate PIM and ERP. The more of these questions you say "yes" to, the more likely it is you should



plan for a tight integration of the two:

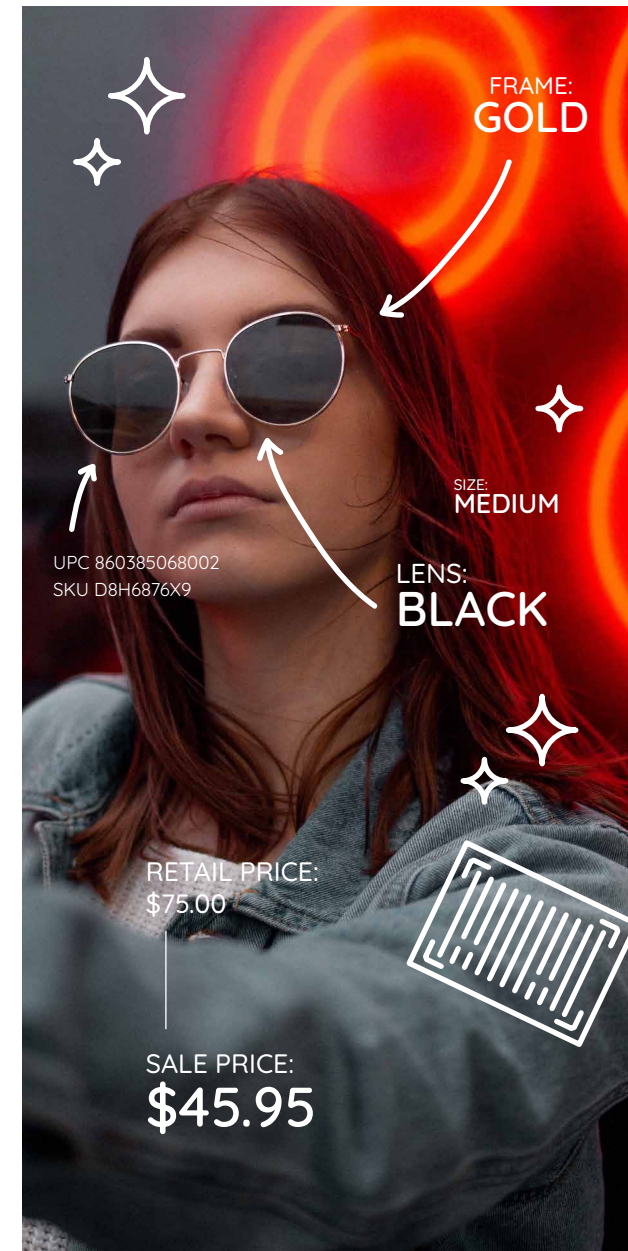
- Should a product's life cycle start in ERP or in PIM?
- Should ERP data (prices, inventory status, etc.) be visible in your PIM system?
- Do you need to be able to maintain PIM data in ERP without opening your PIM tool?
- Do you need to generate data sheets, or similar outputs, in ERP?

# What Features Should I Look for in a PIM System?

The core functionality of PIM software is to work with every platform you touch to automatically retrieve and display the most up-to-date information when a customer is shopping your products. To achieve this goal, **here are some of the key features you want to make sure your PIM system has:**

- ✔ Centralized, media-neutral data management
- ✔ Support for content supply chain system workflows, and printed and online publications
- ✔ Highly configurable and flexible
- ✔ Automated generation of online and offline target formats
- ✔ Management, maintenance, transfer, and output of product information
- ✔ Integration with ERP and your other systems and databases
- ✔ Management of communication, purchasing, and production data
- ✔ Media, digital asset, and translation management
- ✔ Cross-media use of stored product information

For a simpler way to launch products faster, establish cross-channel coherence, create rich content, manage a range of digital assets, and overall master your product content—all with a straightforward month-to-month subscription and no hidden fees— [try Plytix](#).





# Which are the Top PIM Providers to Consider?

Online retailers come in many shapes and sizes. Unfortunately, most of the top PIM software comes in one shape and size—very large and very expensive.

As more modern online brands and retailers break into the ecommerce game, feature-heavy PIM software with complicated workflows and expensive add-ons is becoming a thing of the past.

You want something that's flexible and easy to use, easy to learn, and easy to add team members to as your business grows.

**To help you choose the PIM solution that makes the most sense for your ecommerce business, we put together a comparison of the five top PIM systems: Salsify, Akeneo, Syndigo, Sales Layer, and Plytix.**



CONTINUED | WHICH TOP PIM PROVIDER IS RIGHT FOR ME?



	Salsify	Akeneo	Syndigo
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	A feature-saturated, cloud-based solution, built and priced for large enterprises.	Built for large enterprises. Focused on providing a core system, with add-ons you can buy.	Described as a Content Experience Hub, Syndigo is a single-source network for managing and syndicating content.
<b>COST</b>	Salsify doesn't communicate their prices online, but after interviewing some of their clients, the lowest starting price encountered was <b>\$24,000 per year</b> .	Akeneo's Growth Plan includes access to their hosted PIM at a starting price of <b>\$25,000 per year</b> . They do offer a free version of their open source PIM—keep in mind this doesn't include the development resources needed to set up and install the software.	Syndigo does not provide pricing information on their website.
<b>IDEAL CUSTOMER</b>	Large enterprises with 500+ employees.	Large enterprises with 500+ employees.	Large enterprises with 500+ employees.



## CONTINUED | WHICH TOP PIM PROVIDER IS RIGHT FOR ME?



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### DESCRIPTION

A self-service, catalog management tool with big features that meet simplicity.

Plytix offers a simple to use and powerful PIM, designed and priced for all types and sizes of businesses.

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### COST

Sales Layer does not offer customers a free version, but there is an option of a free trial. The paid version starts at \$1,000/month.

Plytix offers a free version as well as a variety of paid plans. The paid plans range from 450€/month to 1650€/month and can be customized to whatever your business needs. All paid plans include file storage and unlimited users.

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### IDEAL CUSTOMER

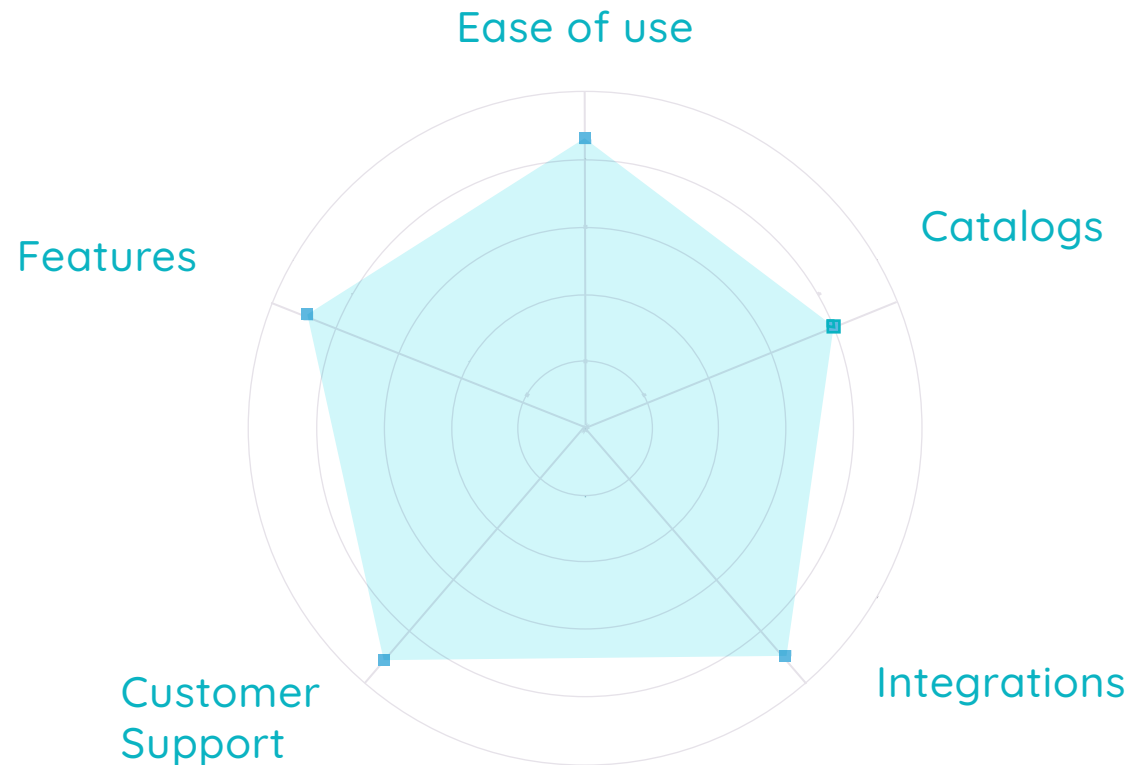
All businesses, big or small.

All businesses, big or small.



Salsify is a cloud-based Product Experience Management (PXM) tailored to large enterprises. Their main mission is to help big enterprises against the threat of newcomers—by helping them ‘win on the digital shelf.’

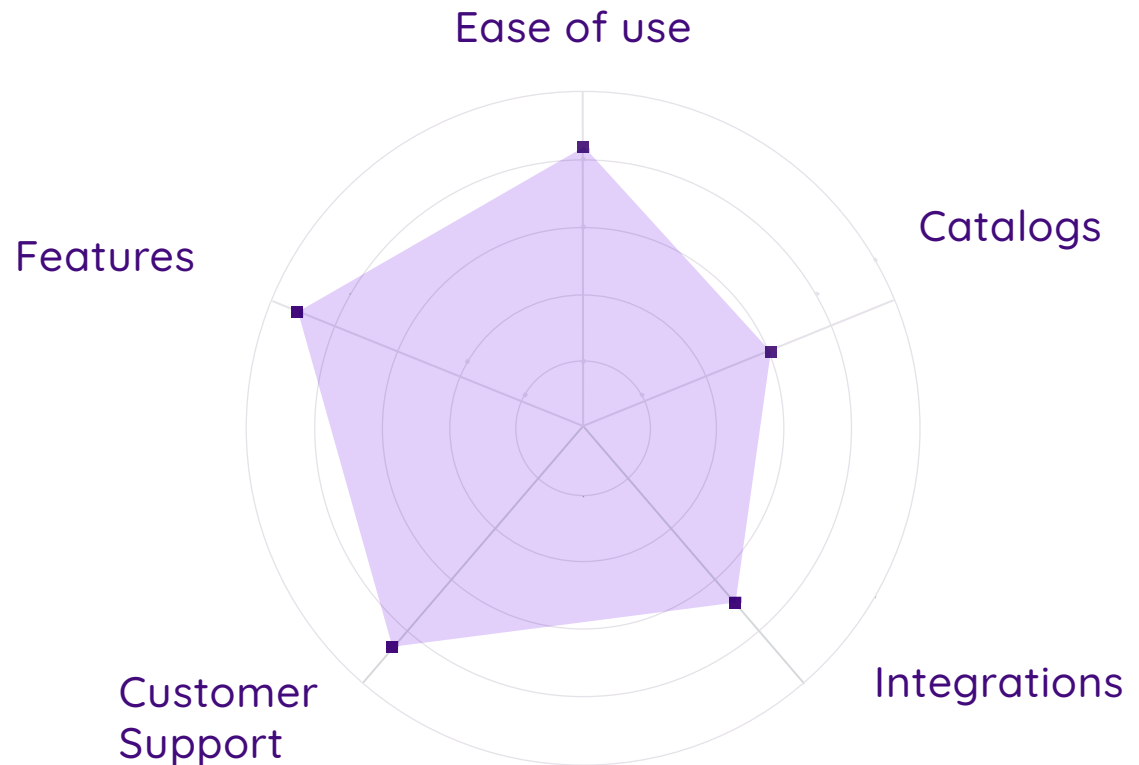
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Akeneo is a highly extensible and customizable open source PIM system designed for large enterprises. It comes with an import engine to streamline data, onboarding from virtually any source and utilizes a product grid to put info in order—while helping you execute advanced catalog searches.

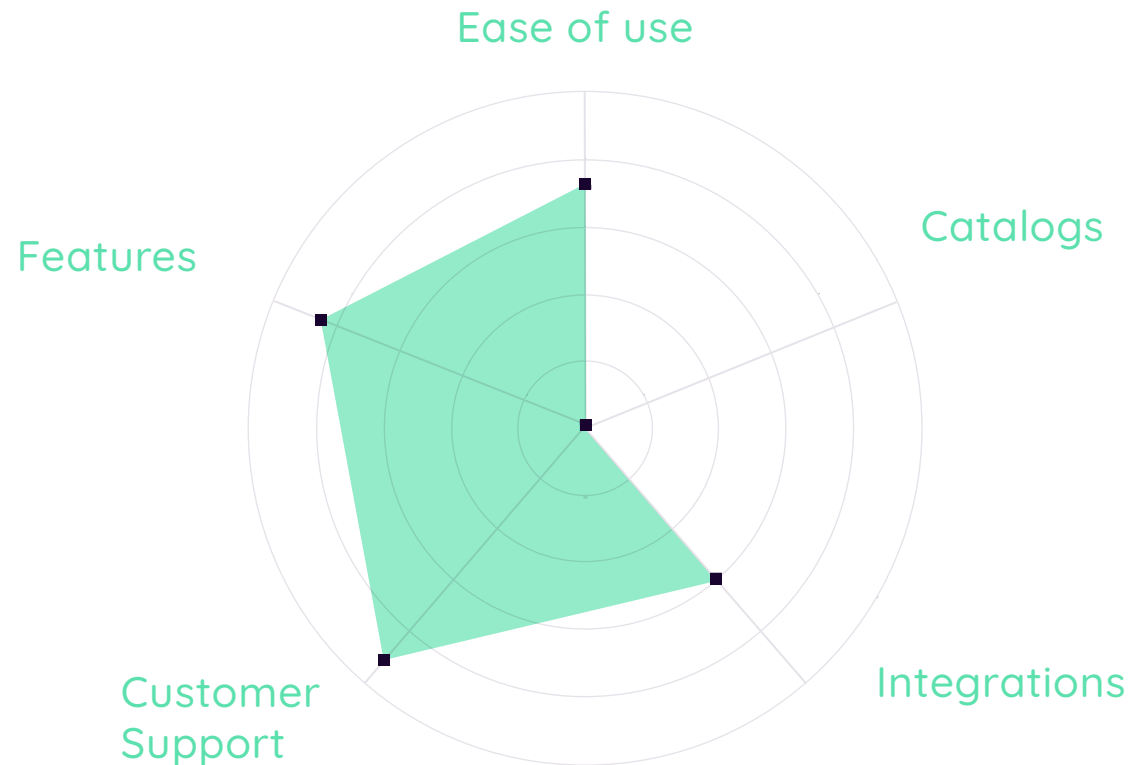
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Syndigo is a Content Experience Hub for manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and retailer recipients. A platform to expand reach and elevate experiences—all powered by data.

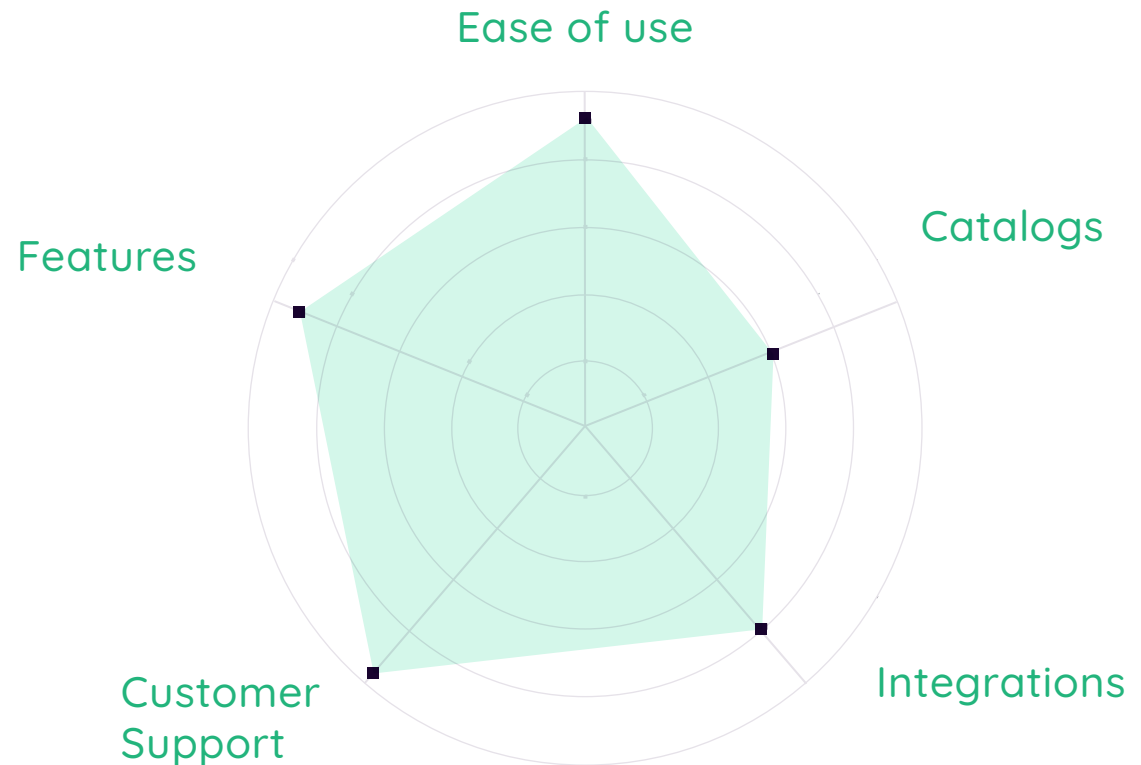
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Sales Layer is a cloud-hosted database for product catalogs. You can manage and share content to marketplaces, distributors, and manufacturers, both upstream and downstream.

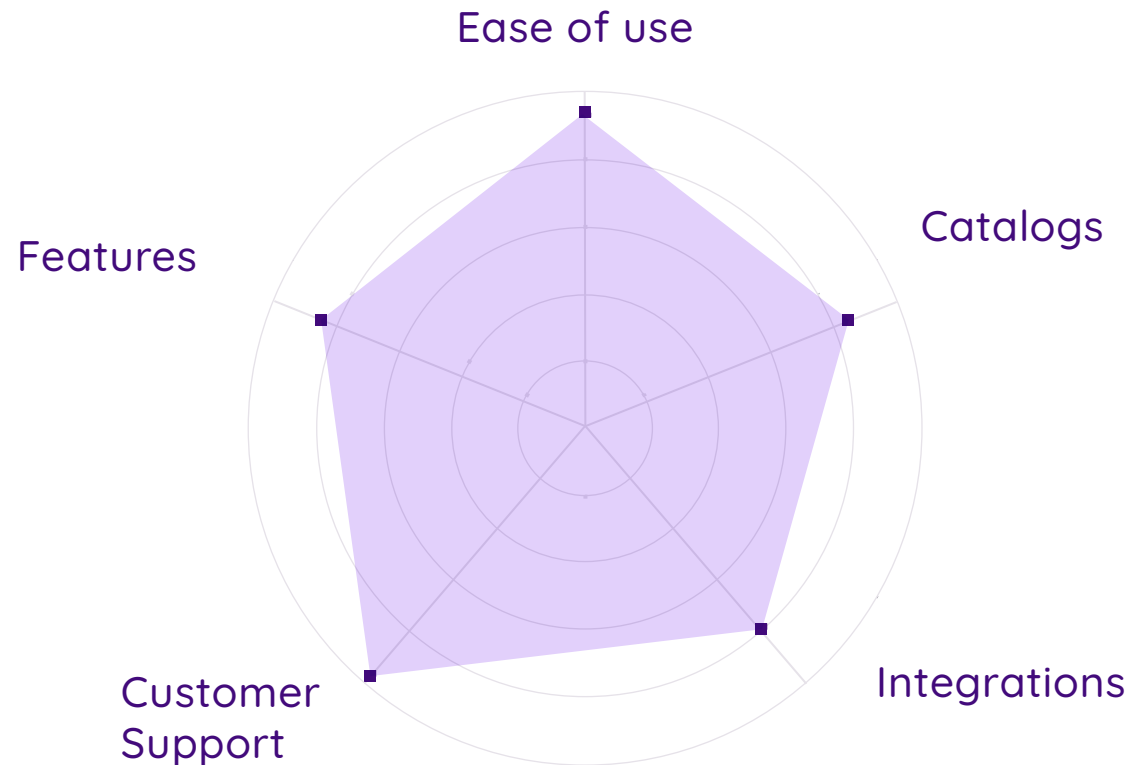
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Plytix is a cloud based PIM, tailored to ecommerce companies, big or small. Founded by ex-Googlers, their mission is to help online retailers compete in the hypercompetitive market by providing a powerful platform at a low cost. Plytix has product development and customer support at its very core of their operation.

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# Choosing the right PIM software with confidence

Let us make it easy for you! It may seem like there's an abundance of factors to consider when adopting a PIM - or software in general. Who will it affect? Marketing? Sales? The guy that sits in IT? How long is it going to take you to get started vs. actually becoming fully onboarded? What are your competitors doing? Do we really need all those features - which will solve our needs? *You get the jist.*

One thing is certain, it is crucial to do your research. There's nothing to say you don't meet the PIM of your dreams on day 1, but make sure you have done your due dilligence, and can make that all-important decision with confidence.

Hi, I'm Matthew!



To give you a helping hand, we'd be happy to **jump on a call** and help talk you through all your PIM options.

**Speak to a real human like me, so we can help you find the best PIM tool for your business (even if it's not us).**



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