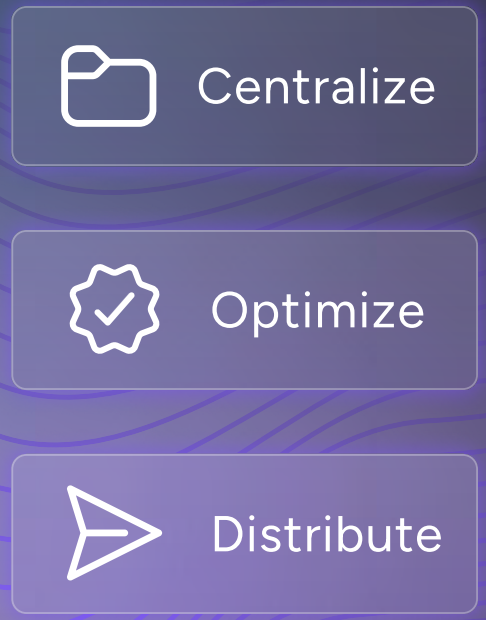
COD Framework for Product Information Management

A proven approach to managing products from SKU creation to market.



Introduction

Your product data is probably scattered. Pricing sits in one system. Photos sit in a shared drive. Descriptions sit in a spreadsheet someone built years ago.

None of these systems talk to each other. So nothing keeps them in sync.

Add more sales channels, and it gets harder. Each one sets its own rules. Rules change without warning. Content ready for one channel often isn't

ready for the next.

This isn't anyone's fault. It's what happens when a business grows without one clear system of record for its product data.

A review of more than 60 conversations with commerce and merchandising teams found three problems. They came up in this order[1]:

- Scattered, inconsistent data
- Data that can't keep up as the catalog grows
- Data that's ready at home, but not ready to publish

The order matters just as much as the list. Scattered data came up first. Keeping pace with a growing catalog came second. Getting content to channels came third.

That's not random. It's a sequence. If you haven't fixed the first problem, you won't get far enough to notice the third.

That sequence is where this framework comes from. Centralize. Optimize. Distribute. In that order, on purpose.

It works no matter what tools you use.



Definitions

Product information

The complete set of product information an organization manages, bringing product data and content together.

Product data

Structured information about a product, such as identifiers, attributes, pricing, and categorization.

Product content

The descriptive information customers see, such as titles, descriptions, and product features.

Digital assets

The images, videos, documents, and other files associated with a product.

Readiness

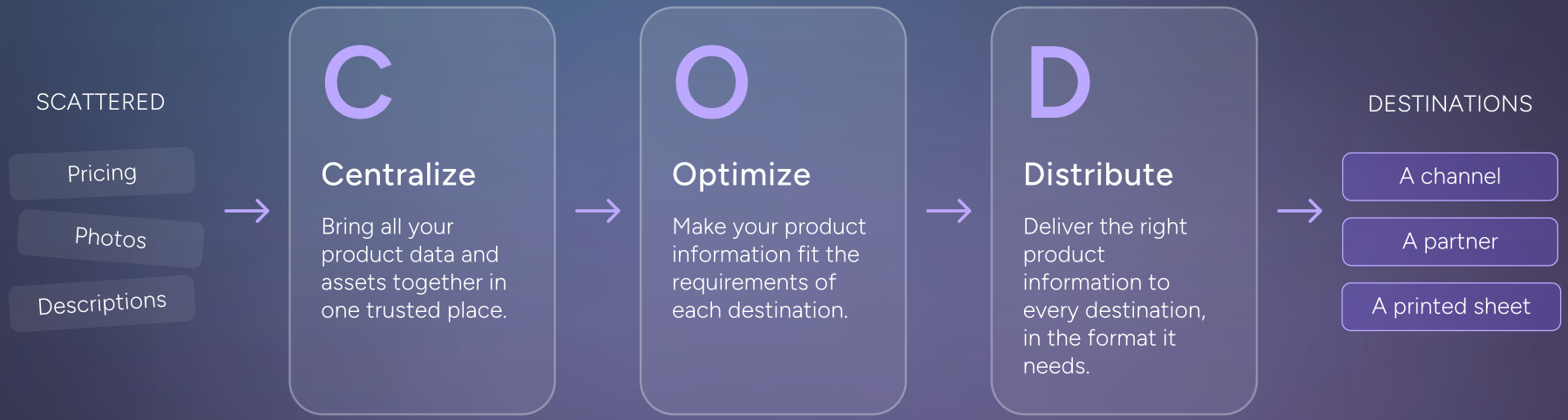
How well a piece of product information meets the requirements of a specific destination. A product isn't simply "ready" or "not ready." It's ready for a particular destination.

Destinations

Any channel, system, or audience that receives product information, such as a marketplace, retailer, or reseller

COD Framework

Centralize. Optimize. Distribute. In that order, on purpose.



01

Centralize

Putting everything in one place isn't just neater. It's faster, too.

Plytix's 2026 Commerce Napkin[2] shows what happens when product information is brought together. Tasks like filling in product details, translating, and tagging become easier to automate.

When data and assets are spread across different systems, those tasks become harder to manage. More time goes into chasing information and keeping everything in sync.

What it means. Centralizing means putting all your product data and content in one place, no matter where it started. You manage each piece where it's actually correct.

How it works. This isn't a one-time move. It's an ongoing habit. When a product's info changes, it should change in one place. Then every team can trust that place.

Example: you update a price in a spreadsheet nobody else reads. That's not centralizing. That's just making a copy.

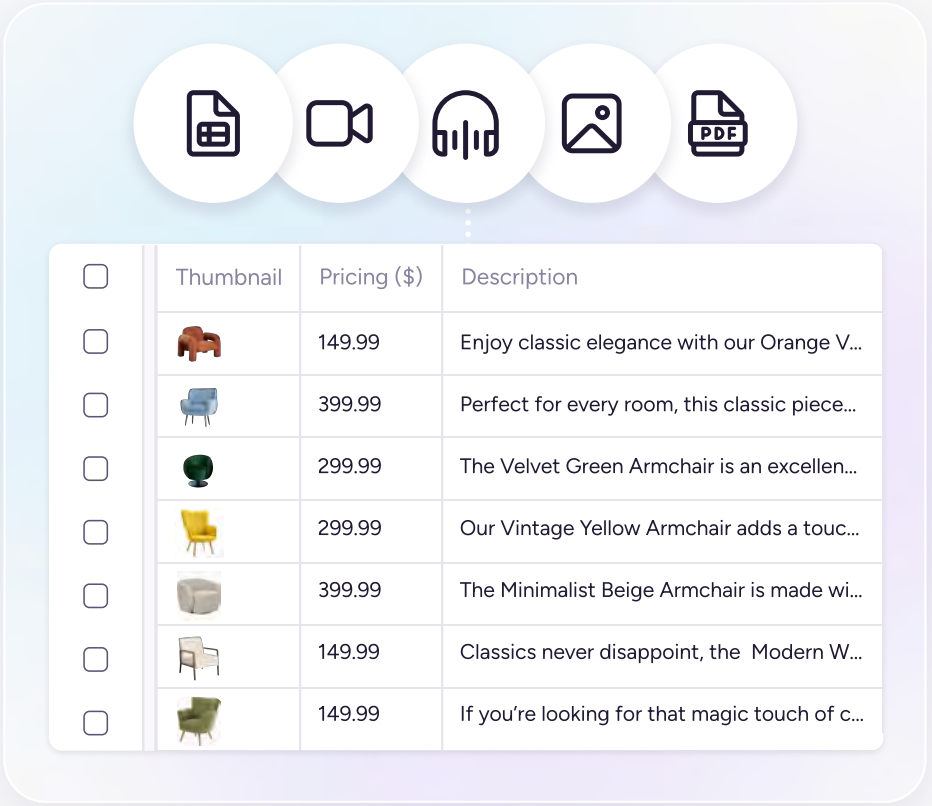
Where it goes wrong. The most common mistake is centralizing halfway.

Maybe you pull your data together but leave assets in a separate tool.

Maybe one market centralizes while others keep their own copies.

Either way, you get the look of one source of truth, not the real thing.

That's often worse than not centralizing at all.



02

Optimize

A product is never just "ready." It's ready for somewhere.

A title that fits Amazon's 75-character limit[3] might be way too long for another channel.

Google allows up to 150 characters. But shoppers usually only read the first 70 or so.[4]

This gap matters even more now. AI shopping agents are a destination too. One benchmark found the top reason product matches fail: missing or wrong attributes.[5]

What it means. Optimizing means shaping your product information to fit each place it's going.

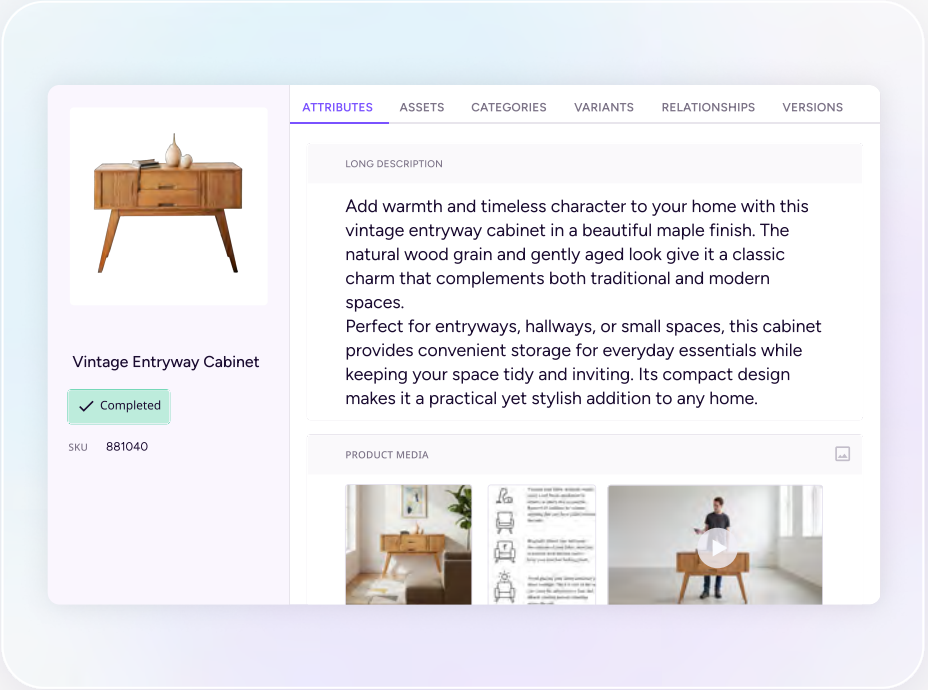
You check it's ready against that one destination, not some generic, internal standard.

How it works. This means filling in missing details, fixing mistakes, and structuring things so they pass each destination's checks.

Every destination wants something different. So one product might need several ready versions at once.

Where it goes wrong. A destination changes its rules.

The version you built for it quietly falls behind. Nothing flags the problem when it happens.



03

Distribute

This is where readiness pays off. A product that's ready for one place gets sent there. It doesn't need to be ready anywhere else first.

Adding a new destination shouldn't cost as much as the first one. The first setup means building everything from scratch. Every one after that builds on the structure Centralize and Optimize already gave you.

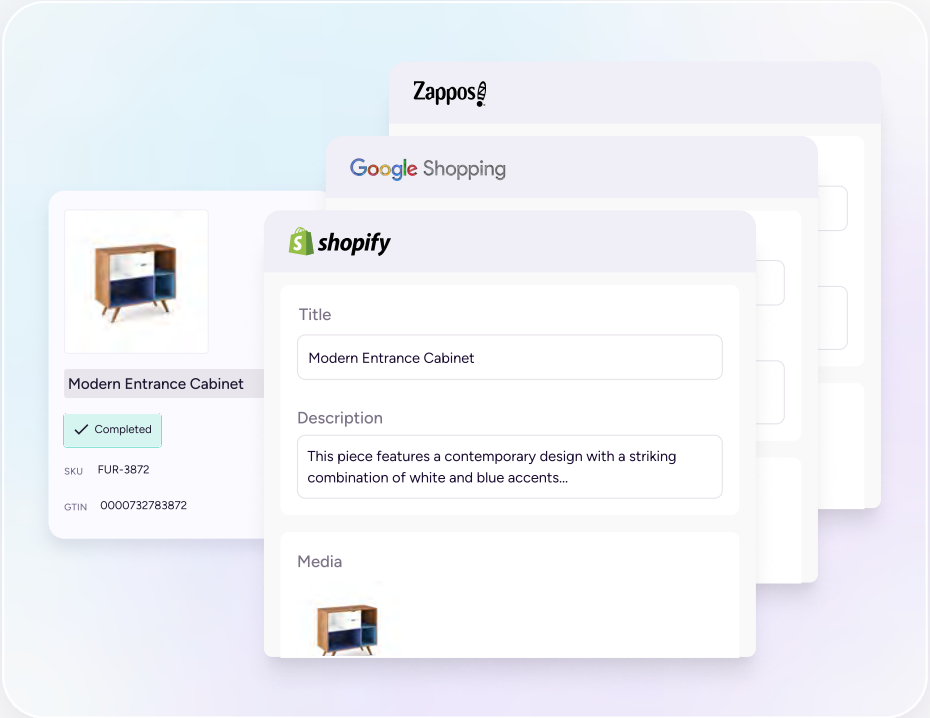
What it means. Distributing means sending your ready product information to each destination. In the format, structure, and timing it needs, without falling back into slow, manual handoffs.

How it works. You keep the information centrally. Then it's transformed and delivered in whatever shape each destination expects. A channel. A partner. A printed sheet. No second, separate job needed to keep that version current.

Where it goes wrong. Treat distribution as a one-off export, not an ongoing job, and updates pile up.

Every change has to get pushed out by hand, again. That brings back the exact syncing problem Centralize was meant to fix.

Plytix's 2026 Commerce Napkin[2] put a number on it: getting product information market-ready took 30 to 150 hours per 100 SKUs, across more than 800 commerce organizations. A fivefold gap. It comes down to process, not product count.



Putting COD into practice

Start by finding where you are. Most teams are stuck at one stage, even if they're working on all three. Fix that stage first, then move to the next.

C Centralize

YOU'RE HERE IF

- The same product has different prices in different systems.
- Finding the right photo means asking someone.

START HERE

- ✓ Map what you have. List every place product data and assets live today, and who updates each one.
- ✓ Choose one place for all of it. Data and assets together. Leaving assets behind is centralizing halfway.

O Distribute

YOU'RE HERE IF

- Your product information is ready, but someone still exports and uploads it by hand
- Listings get rejected, and nobody knows why until it happens.

START HERE

- ✓ Pick your most important destination. Write down its rules: title length, required attributes, and image specs.
- ✓ Check readiness against it. Fill the gaps for that destination before you add the next one.

D Distribute

YOU'RE HERE IF

- Your product information is ready, but someone still exports and uploads it by hand
- A price change takes days to reach every channel.

START HERE

- ✓ Connect one destination. Send ready product information to it automatically, in the format it expects.
- ✓ Let updates flow on their own. A change in your central source should reach every destination without a second job.

> Don't skip ahead. Distributing data that isn't centralized or optimized just sends the mess further, faster.

Conclusion

Most people talk about product data in terms of tools. Which system to buy. Which integration to build.

This guide starts somewhere else. What has to be true about your product information, no matter what tool you use, before you can manage it at all.

1. Centralizing puts your product information in one place.
2. Optimizing gets it ready for wherever it's going.
3. Distributing sends it there, without bringing back the mess Centralize fixed.

> None of the three works alone. And the order isn't optional.

Centralize without Optimize, and you get a tidy archive nobody can use.

Optimize without a real center, and you're just polishing different versions of the truth.

Get the order right, and most of what looked impossible turns out to be fixable.

That's also why product information management became its own software category. The job's big enough to need tools built just for it.

Publisher's Note

This guide was put together by Plytix, a product information management (PIM) company. It's part of the bigger conversation about managing product information. The framework doesn't depend on Plytix's software, or anyone else's. It stands on its own, no matter who wrote it down.

Sources

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