KILLER APP FOR E-COMMERCE

Businesses, in time, can find their business systems cluttered with dirty or inaccurate product data. Bad data can slow the progress of the company like sludge can kill horsepower in an engine. Dirty data slows the sales process and slows the order process because sales channels may be working off old product data. This leads to lost sales and a high rate of order mistakes and invoice errors which must be fixed at a high cost to the company.

Product Information, or the data describing and specifying a company's products can be found in several systems at many companies with no easy way to aggregate or collect this product data. This data is not easy to manage and is made up of multi-media like images, audio and video, pictures, text, and integers all in various file formats. When product data is in different formats, different systems and in disparate applications it is very hard to work with. Product data is in the erp system, may be in a graphics tool like InDesign or Quark and can be salted across the company's locations in isolated folders on desktops and laptops. This data, costly to create, is also costly to use and will add little to the corporate marketing intellectual property.

Distributors or wholesalers, and manufacturers's representatives have a heavy product information management task. A distributor can carry dozens of lines and must gather product data from dozens of sources. Gathering supplier data, managing and transforming product data and then distributing accurate product data to sales channels, web catalogs and print catalogs is a costly and time eating chore. Often, supplier data is dirty when it finally arrives at the distributor and by the time supplier product data is cleansed and distributed some of it is obsolete. The product data is obsolete because a product price may have changed or an image was transformed or a short description was rewritten during the extended time needed to manage and distribute the product data.

The best way to streamline product data management may be to install product information (PIM) software. A good PIM solution can acquire product data from all systems, including your suppliers and disparate internal systems and safely secure it in one place. Product data acquisition can be pain free and is fast. Product data is put in one place that can be found by marketing teams so they can work. Marketing teams can now manage and transform product data into sales driving web catalogs and print catalogs and sales material. This one place is accessible to all marketing teams, localized to different locations around the world, so all marketers can add value. Price changes are easy to edit, data transformations like building taxonomies and re-classifying products is simple to do. Sizzle and sales teeth can be applied to long and short product descriptions and sales materials gain a professional look and feel.

The work includes transforming multi-media files like flash and jpegs, and to design templates for catalogs. Graphics applications like InDesign can talk to the PIM and workflow can be built to include outsourced designers into the marketing process. Sales materials like catalogs and sales flyers will be polished to a fine selling edge and can be saved for re-use across sales teams both direct and in-direct. You can cut 70% of the time and cost from catalog creation and the days of creating a catalog which is obsolete before it is off the press due to the large print run and the time to get it set up are over. You can print in smaller batches and boost sales from key customers and key prospects by customizing the look of your catalogs for specific buyers.

Your buyers will buy easier from you because your web sites will be dynamic and your sites will publish accurate and easy to use e-catalogs. Your customers will love this because they are demanding accurate and timely data to make purchase decisions and if your web site is not doing this they will click away fast. Your web sites can be designed to target key customers to sell key products and this will increase sales because your product data will be more relevant to key word searches.

Sales data can be punched out to your PIM solution and product sales reports can be analyzed. All catalog pages on-line and off-line are measured and reported in the PIM solution. This can give the business leverage and negotiation ammunition because you know exactly how much product is sold and you know how much space is used. This is just like a grocery store, you will know better how to position the fast and slow movers and how to offer incentives and up sells and cross sells.

Your orders will be more accurate because your sales teams work from accurate timely product data. This makes the business stickier, and will retain customers longer because you have your product information act together.

When a company adds speed to product information logistics and builds accuracy and freshness to product data sales will grow. This is logical and this must happen. This is logical because if sales teams, both direct and in-direct, are showing customers accurate product data and if marketing channels, web sites, sales flyers, sales bulletins and direct mail pieces are fueled with accurate and professional product information, order errors will go down and sales orders will go up.