# PRODUCT EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT

INTRO

Marketing and e-commerce managers have the challenging task of using product communication to increase sales, improve customer satisfaction and build a strong brand in the long term. This is anything but easy, especially in today's digital commerce: growing global competition is vying for the attention of consumers in an ever-increasing number of sales channels, expectations of product content are rising and, at the same time, cost pressure is becoming ever greater. As a result, the task is to create optimal product experiences in digital commerce as effectively and efficiently as possible – and this can only be achieved with perfect product content and effective communication management.

For most companies, this means that sooner or later, they will have to take these increasing requirements into account in their digitalisation strategy and get to grips with the corresponding technology market. In doing so, they are increasingly confronted with a whole range of buzzwords – PIM, DAM, MDM, PXM, customer experience, or even digital shelf are just a few examples of how the various market players are fuelling the noise in the market and confusing decision-makers rather than actually offering them guidance.

In this e-paper, we have therefore summarised all the important basics of the key PIM, DAM and channel management system levels and described how they interact with each other and how artificial intelligence in particular can significantly increase the efficiency of the respective software disciplines.
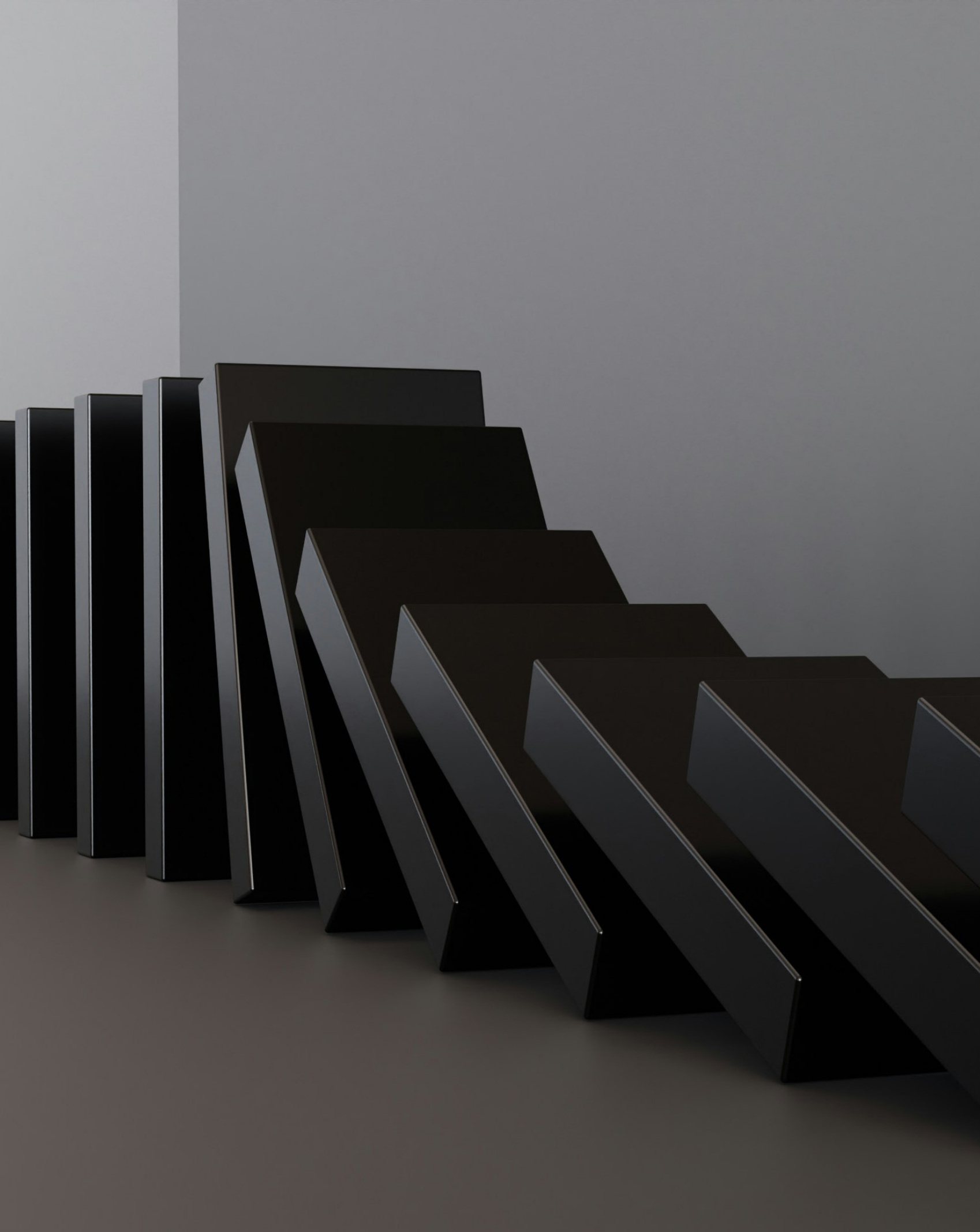
THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL COMMERCE ON THE VALUE CHAIN

Offline is a thing of the past, online is the present, and with it comes a shift towards a digitalised world in which more and more digital channels and their product content determine the economic structure.

The classic offline structures of the value chain are being supplemented by the increasingly important elements of digital commerce. Companies are reliant on an optimised digital information supply chain that is as efficient as possible, particularly in competitive industries. In the digital age in particular, it is therefore extremely important to focus on each individual link in the chain in order to meet the challenges of digital commerce.

Processes that are becoming more complex and also more technical due to the digitalisation of the various economic structures require suitable management systems that can handle the mass of different data and information. Nevertheless, the use of Excel spreadsheets is still a widespread reality and, in many places, leads to redundant data storage, outdated document versions and sometimes serious data quality problems. The use of product information management and data asset management systems, which manage and maintain the relevant data in a centralised and media-neutral manner, as well as reliably transferring it to every company channel, is much more effective and resource-efficient.

Digital commerce has changed massively in recent years: The number of channels is constantly growing, and with each channel comes the need for new and, above all, more content. Product content must be particularly convincing in terms of quality – this is the only way to generate converting product experiences. This includes comprehensive product information, marketing texts, slogans, product images and videos, as well as corporate design elements and graphics that increase attention in the digital channels.

Every customer currently has more opportunities than ever to get in touch with companies – and vice versa. The transition between offline and online is becoming increasingly fluid, and the number of possible points of interaction is growing. This makes consistent and cross-channel product communication and customer contact all the more important. Only with such a holistic approach can the company succeed in positioning itself in the market.

To successfully and efficiently master this task, the right technological foundation is required: PXM encompasses the core disciplines of Product Information Management (PIM), Digital Asset Management (DAM) and Channel Management (CM) and thus covers both the procurement and maintenance of product content as well as the control and management of the various data recipients.
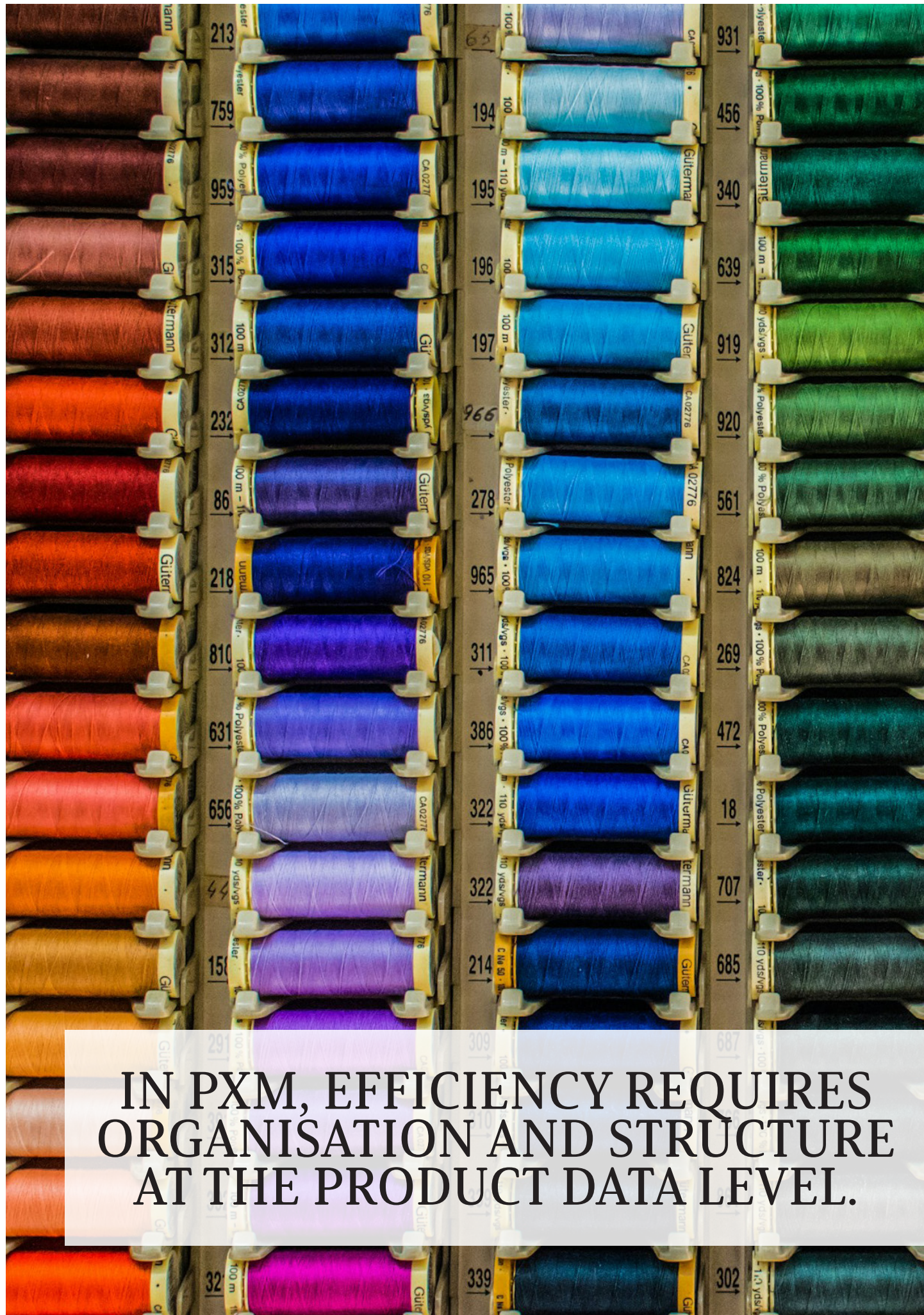
PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

From automated data onboarding to centralised data management:
PIM systems are essential for sales companies and
smooth and reliable information management.

Product data is essential for many companies, but managing these sometimes very large amounts of data is a challenge for many users on the company side. With their centralised and media-neutral data management, PIM systems ensure efficient data maintenance while reliably complying with data quality rules. These solutions thus create a single source of truth for all communication processes in the context of the products.

PIM systems offer e-commerce significant competitive advantages. Above all, this includes the centralisation of all work processes related to product data and their distribution to the respective company channels. Everything is controlled and managed via a centralised system, which contributes to an overall resource-efficient way of working. PIM systems usually obtain product data from various sources such as ERP systems, supplier portals, Excel spreadsheets and others. Data onboarding is automated by modern PIM solutions, and the data is transformed into the target model with the help of mapping. Validation rules ensure the necessary quality of the data as soon as it is obtained. This means that a high level of data quality can be maintained right from the start. The benefits that a product

information system offers the respective companies also include the option of expanding the PIM system through the use of AI services that further increase the efficiency of processes relating to the management and enrichment of product data. These include, among others:

- Text generation: AI services are able to create product descriptions or product information based on certain predefined criteria.
- Text translation: Translations are also part of an AI's remit – good product descriptions in the appropriate target language are an essential component of effective marketing on an international level.

PIM systems offer decisive advantages, especially if a company operates several sales channels, as a well-structured PIM system can ensure that all product information remains up-to-date and consistent on each individual channel. Thanks to their centralised data storage, PIM systems not only offer advantages for e-commerce or marketing, but also support sales, customer service and product management in their daily tasks.

IN PXM, EFFICIENCY REQUIRES ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE AT THE PRODUCT DATA LEVEL.

DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Audio-visual communication is an important factor for many companies, without which their own public presentation is not possible. A DAM system is the perfect support for this.

In addition to the management of pure product information, the organisation of visual elements is also part of optimised product content management.

Image files such as photos, graphics, charts, videos, animations and audio files are managed by a digital asset management system.

Audio-visual elements are of great importance for a company's communication, as they often create a lasting impression on customers. A company website must use visual elements, for example, in order to evoke emotions and associations in customers that elicit a positive attitude. A DAM system ensures that all digital assets are available everywhere within a company at the same time, which ensures that the data records are always up to date. If changes are made, every employee involved is informed accordingly and can work with the respective updates. Digital asset management systems offer many advantages, such as:

- Avoiding redundant data storage
- Improved workflow efficiency by avoiding manual processes
- Traceable activities that involve a change to assets
- The creation of guidelines and templates for content-compliant working methods

Similar to a PIM system, AI can also provide valuable support for DAM systems, significantly increasing productivity and efficiency. Artificial intelligence can perform the following tasks, among others:

- Repetitive image processing, such as cropping parts of images, indexing or even image processing as such, such as masking, shadow or skin editing
- Managing images of people, which can easily be carried out by AI thanks to facial recognition. A system such as this can also be used to sort and select images of people according to predefined parameters
- Supporting layout processes, including their complete automation

These technologies are constantly evolving and becoming more and more effective. The number of functions that can be carried out by AI tools in the future is growing steadily. Meanwhile, AI technology is becoming increasingly reliable, even if manual follow-up checks and approvals remain necessary to ensure optimum quality.

Product information management and digital asset management systems must go hand in hand in order to perfectly map today's business reality in all its complexity. In order to integrate the two software areas as seamlessly as possible and thus enable effective product content management, it makes sense to bundle them in one and the same system.

EFFECTIVE CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

The number of corporate channels is growing, and with it, the responsibility to structure them profitably as part of channel management.

Well-organised management of the respective sales channels is important for any company that offers products or services. Customers obtain information about a product or service via various channels, and the customer journey often includes a large number of different communication channels. This makes it all the more important to effectively organise product content in a way that is appropriate for the channel. The way in which a sales channel communicates often differs, but granular content can still be the same as on other channels.

Optimised channel management includes various elements. The control and coordination of the various channels and the content used there are particularly important. Information such as prices, stock levels and product specifications must be managed individually. Successful channel management leads to various benefits for the company. These include, among others:

- Increasing your own reach by utilising multiple sales channels
- An improved customer experience, as your company ensures customer satisfaction through a smooth process on many different channels with equally different touchpoints
- Cost efficiency through effective processes and avoidance of repetitive work
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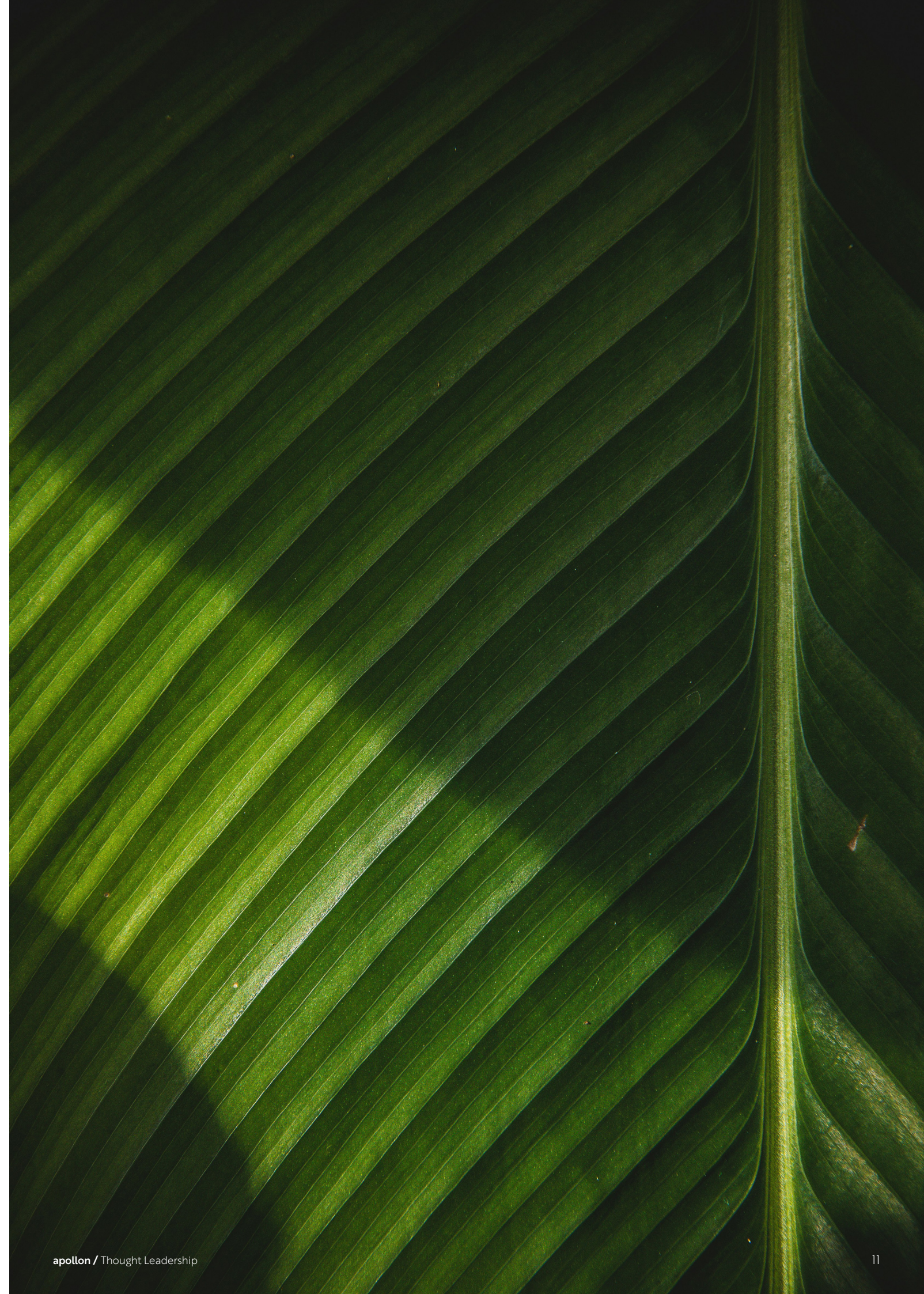
MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The market is now overloaded with different terms – for companies, this often leads to more uncertainty than orientation. The main reason for the growing complexity of the software market is the highly dynamic nature of today's digital business reality. New communication channels and sales platforms are constantly emerging, competition is becoming ever more global and differentiated, and consumers have growing expectations in terms of the quality of product messages and the transparency of product information.

Keeping all of this under control has become an almost unmanageable challenge for many companies. As a result, the focus is shifting to the digital information supply chain, which forms the basis for flexible and effective communication. For example, many companies realised during the pandemic that investments in the new e-commerce environments have not led to the expected increases in sales without high-quality product data.

Accordingly, basic data management systems such as PIM and DAM form the starting point for optimisation projects in the context of marketing, sales, customer service and product management. However, the management of granular product data and media content is only the first step – for company decision-makers, it is now no longer advisable to approach individual software solutions in isolation. Rather, it is important to include subsequent software areas such as channel management in their strategy and thus consider the management of the entire product experience.

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APOLLON

Apollon is a leading software provider for the auto-
mation of product data communication and data
distribution in omnichannel commerce. Its core
product and central hub is its Online Media Net
(OMN) with the modules Product Information Ma-
nagement (PIM), Digital Asset Management (DAM),
Channel Management (CM) and Workflow Manage-
ment (WM).