

Case Study

Advellence and Syndigo Enable a Single Source of Truth at Beiersdorf



Initial Situation

With the introduction of the Riversand solution, Beiersdorf implemented its first PIM system. Without a central technology for managing, maintaining, and distributing product information, the sales and marketing teams faced significant challenges. For example, field sales staff had to export fundamental product information from SAP for customer interactions. This was not only cumbersome but also resulted in information that was not prepared in a customer-oriented way.

Marketing staff faced similar challenges: creating uniform product communication was nearly impossible with country-specific Excel lists that were not maintained consistently across locations. With major initiatives such as a new website and online shop on the horizon, implementing a central PIM system became essential.

Goals

The initial goal of the PIM implementation project was to support the company's web presence with centralised product information and to gradually onboard additional countries and brands. The long-term objective was to establish the PIM system as the enterprise-wide Single Source of Truth for all product data.

This included a change process to embed the new system into the daily work of employees across all country organisations. Over time, further requirements emerged, especially regarding the integration of the PIM system with additional channels. Continuous enhancement of data governance and ongoing optimisation of data quality remain key priorities for Beiersdorf.

At a Glance

Initial Situation

No PIM system in use across the organisation | upcoming website and online shop projects

Project

Native SaaS solution | user-friendliness | integration capability, flexibility, and future-readiness | change management | data governance

Objectives

Establishing a Single Source of Truth | strong data governance and high data quality | effective data usage

Motivation

Lack of access to product data | non-transparent product life cycle | inconsistent brand communication

Solution Design

Development of a central PIM solution for all country organisations and brands | integration into all relevant systems and channels

Vision

Further optimisation of data governance and product data quality | stronger integration with upstream and downstream channels

In Conversation Christian Renz



Christian Renz

Christian Renz worked in project management at OTTO during his computer science studies. He has been with Beiersdorf for fifteen years and has supported marketing projects from an IT perspective for the past nine years.

Mr. Renz, what prompted Beiersdorf to introduce a PIM system?

The need became apparent in several areas simultaneously. Before implementing the PIM system, field sales relied on SAP exports during customer interactions – which was neither impactful nor customer-oriented. These Excel lists contained only rudimentary product information and were not useful from a sales perspective.

From the business side, there was also a growing need: required product information had to be manually compiled from different Excel lists, and communication was inconsistent due to uneven data maintenance. As the website and online shop were also upcoming projects, it became clear that we needed a PIM system.

What were your requirements for the PIM solution, and how did they evolve over time?

One of our main requirements was usability – and this remains a key topic today. User-friendliness must be continually improved to make working in the system as easy as possible. Another crucial requirement was integration capability.

This applied to SAP, where we maintain many product-relevant attributes, but also to other channels and systems. We knew early on that we would need to use PIM data in many additional contexts.

Flexibility of the data model was also important to ensure that the management and handling of data could meet our specific needs. Although these core needs have not changed over the years, other projects influenced the requirements – such as the website relaunch, the online shop, the rollout to other countries, or the migration to the new Riversand version.

We invested significant time in building a solid data foundation. Now and in the future, we must ensure that this data is used effectively – not only for our own operations but also flexibly for evolving market needs.

About Beiersdorf

Beiersdorf AG was founded in Hamburg in 1882 by pharmacist Paul C. Beiersdorf. With iconic skincare brands such as NIVEA, Eucerin, Hansaplast, La Prairie, and Labello, the company has evolved into a globally successful consumer goods leader over its 140-year history.

Today, Beiersdorf operates more than 170 international subsidiaries, and NIVEA products are sold in around 200 countries, making it one of the world's largest and most successful skincare brands. Since 2001, the tesa SE group has also belonged to Beiersdorf as an independently managed division.

In 2014, the company decided to implement a PIM system as the technological foundation for the country-specific NIVEA websites – establishing its first product data management solution. Step by step, the PIM was rolled out to additional brands, continuously supporting Beiersdorf's digital value chain as e-commerce requirements evolved.

Motivation

Inefficient processes, an inconsistent brand appearance, and a lack of organisational transparency regarding relevant product information triggered the PIM initiative. It soon became clear that website and online shop goals could not be achieved without centralised product data management.

Selecting the right solution – one that offered the necessary integration capabilities, usability, and flexibility – was the first major step. Continuous enhancements, particularly regarding data quality, usability, and integration with additional channels, form the foundation of an ongoing PIM program aimed at ensuring the effective use of centrally maintained data.

Solution Design

The flexible data modelling capabilities of Syndigo PIM were critical to establishing a true Single Source of Truth for all countries and brands. Today, all product data can be managed and maintained company-wide in a single system. Different teams can access the data, and distribution to more than 200 output channels is seamlessly supported.

Organisational dynamics also contributed to the project's success: Beiersdorf ensured close collaboration between IT and business teams, while Advellence and Riversand (now Syndigo) worked together in a highly coordinated and trust-based partnership.

Project

The selection process began with a market analysis to narrow down relevant candidates. For the reference case, both the software providers and their proposed implementation partners were invited – and ultimately, Riversand and Advellence were selected.

The project began with the goal of delivering product information from the Riversand PIM to the NIVEA website for Germany. Additional countries followed, and other brands were later onboarded to the system.

One major challenge was the transformation of the Riversand system into a truly cloud-native SaaS solution – a task that required significant effort and carried some risk. Nevertheless, given the company's cloud-first strategy, migrating to the cloud was the only correct path. The change process at Beiersdorf and the establishment of strong data governance to ensure data quality were successfully implemented thanks to the immediate benefits experienced by users.

Vision

Moving forward, the focus lies on enhancing data governance and data quality, integrating the PIM system with relevant upstream and downstream systems and channels, and automating processes. This will help create comprehensive process control across the entire product life cycle – ensuring transparency and unified status tracking.



About Advellence

As an experienced digital transformation partner for companies of all sizes and industries, Advellence supports organisations in the sustainable development of their digitalisation strategies – building on their existing IT landscape and process structures. With extensive technical and domain expertise, Advellence provides both strategic consulting and hands-on support in the implementation and integration of systems, data, and processes.

With our strong and continuously growing network of technology partnerships, we identify the ideal solution for any starting point – from data and information management to modern work solutions and advanced data and analytics scenarios that give your company the competitive edge it needs.

We connect all your data so it can tell your story. Technical precision is our craft; project execution is our passion. Consulting, technology selection, implementation, development, and integration: At Advellence, you get everything from a single source – with the **Advantage of Excellence**.

About Syndigo

With its Active Content Engine, Syndigo provides solutions for the entire product content life cycle – from master data management to the exchange of data and content between manufacturers, retailers, and end consumers. Thanks to its generic data model, Syndigo enables organisations to manage, enrich, link, and distribute multiple data types within a single multi-domain system and publish high-quality product content across all relevant channels.

Whether dealing with master data, product data, customer data, or location data, the platform handles it seamlessly. Its cloud-native technology and highly flexible data model offer unparalleled scalability and freedom in structuring data. In addition, Syndigo provides integration with the Sharedien DAM solution developed by Advellence.



Otakar Tomes, CEO Advellence

"As an integration partner, one of our key tasks is to support communication between our clients and system providers as effectively as possible."

ADVENCE

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