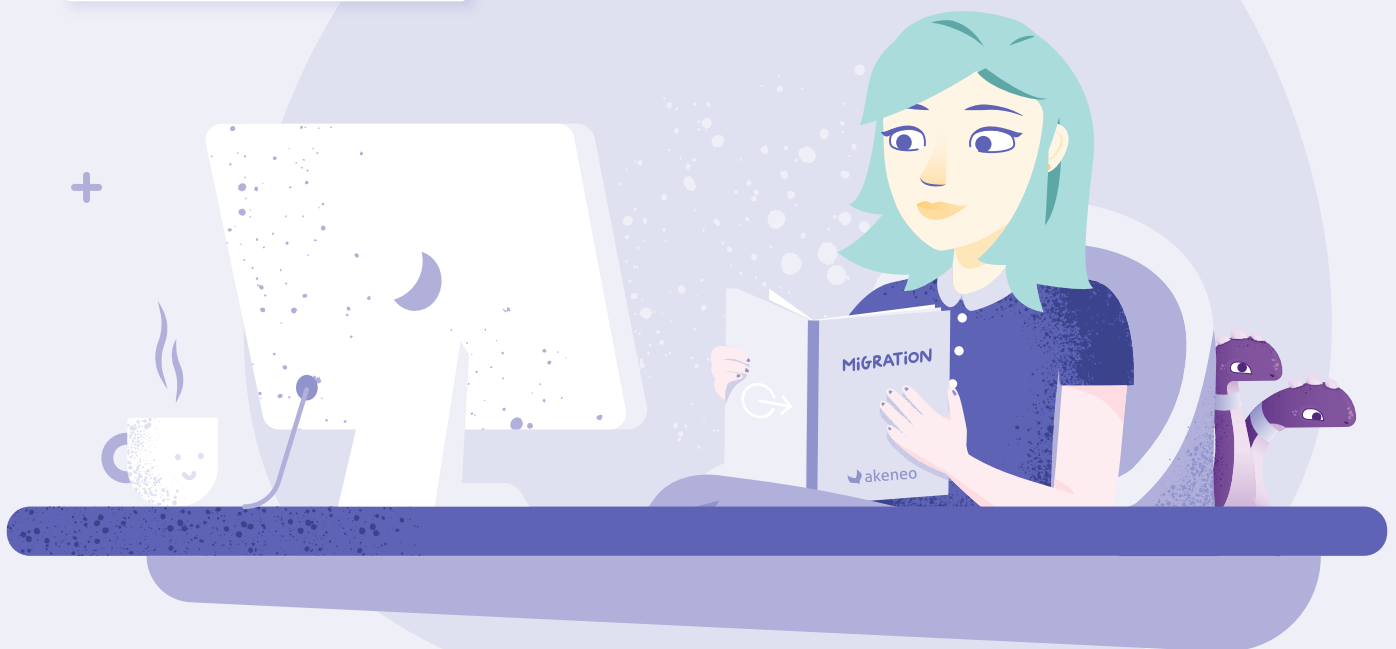


# eCommerce Platform Migration Made Easy with PIM



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# Introduction

Rising customer expectations. Changing buyer profiles. Increased competition. New ways to reach customers. These are some of the realities manufacturers, brands, distributors, and retailers all face as they pursue their commercial objectives to unlock growth.

To remain competitive, businesses need to continuously adapt and innovate to offer the personalized and engaging experiences customers demand. The reward is increased conversions, reduced returns, greater brand loyalty, and greater customer lifetime value. While delivering great customer experiences can partially be addressed by adopting new practices and policies, the technology used to deliver those experiences across sales channels is playing an increasingly large role – and changing rapidly to keep pace in delivering those expectations.

Updating and upgrading your eCommerce platform is a natural, exciting, omnichannel evolution that is increasingly happening. Businesses are making the switch from one eCommerce technology to another in order to take advantage of many advancements designed to help deliver today's customer expectations.

At Akeneo, we believe that a great product experience is critical to delivering a compelling customer experience. Your eCommerce platform migration is a perfect time to improve your product enrichment processes by adopting a product information management (PIM) solution.

Not only will your PIM solution help ease the migration process, but also will ensure you deploy your new eCommerce platform with pristine product information from the start. And, you'll simultaneously be prepared for catalog expansion and growth via new channels and markets.

Let's look at why upgrading your eCommerce platform is important and how PIM eases and supports the evolution and sets you up for success.



# eCommerce platform migration: Why do it?

The dynamics of commerce are shifting. With so much information about products available in so many places, and so many merchants carrying the same or similar items, customers are increasingly becoming informed and as a result, empowered.

These empowered customers demand experience-driven purchasing. They are also subject to a more fragmented buying journey, and are able to access product information from a variety of sources — other merchants, review sites, social media, and so on. As a result, it is easy for shoppers and buyers to switch to competing merchants or distributors.

How is a B2C merchant or B2B distributor to respond and win? This shifting dynamic forces merchants and distributors to deliver truly personalized customer experiences supported by comprehensive, accurate product information, delivered in context for each channel and region. To do this, they need to establish, nurture, and understand the emotional connections and trusted relationships they seek to create with customers. And, time is of the essence — merchants and distributors need to have web stores that perform at scale if they want to keep modern buyers happy.

As a result, a customer-centric commerce approach is more important than ever. As technology evolves, a legacy eCommerce platform will become a limiting factor to deliver comprehensive product information and achieve the great customer experience needed to drive conversions and brand loyalty.

The obvious reason to migrate to a more robust eCommerce platform is to enjoy the range of compelling benefits and advantages for your business that the updated platform promises to deliver. But migrating your eCommerce platform can be a disruptive project — the last thing you want to do is lose sales or have a poorly functioning web store once the new version is deployed. It requires spending time, money, and energy on moving your web store to the new version of the eCommerce platform, building new themes, exploiting new features, integrating new or updated extensions, managing SEO indexes, and much more.



# Why eCommerce platform migration is a good time to adopt PIM

Making the switch to a new eCommerce platform can seem like an overwhelming task. But, by leaning on a PIM solution, you can not only make the migration process easier and faster than ever but also clean and improve the quality of your product information and data, increase efficiency and productivity, and even pave the way for future growth.

A key benefit of a PIM is that it offers a centralized place to collect, standardize, enrich, contextualize, and distribute all your product information. Raw product data is collected from your internal or external sources, such as from data pools or directly from suppliers. Marketers and product teams use a purpose-built interface to standardize and enrich the data and turn it into information and automatically publish it to your sales, marketing, and digital channels. This allows you to have a system of record for all product information, which wipes out errors in product data and increases efficiencies. Not only can you then deploy your new platform with clean product information, but also you can more easily support an omnichannel strategy – by separating product data from the eCommerce platform, it can be prepared for and put in context for every additional channel without disrupting your eCommerce platform operations.

Companies without a PIM will commonly try to use their eCommerce platform as the point of convergence for their product data, which is typically sourced in a variety of operational systems like ERPs, marketing databases, supplier databases, Excel workbooks, and other tools. It's a quick fix to simply aggregate that data, load it into the eCommerce platform, and disperse it to your web store.

But this presents difficulties if you need to handle differently formatted product data from many sources or want to enrich it beyond its source state. As the eCommerce platform's primary mission is to make it easy to sell products and conduct transactions, there is usually a much smaller and less-developed set of product information management features than organizations need to be efficient and productive in delivering a unified commerce strategy. As a result, the struggles to handle disparate product content from so many sources tend to persist and have a negative impact on the new eCommerce platform rollout.



Figure 1: Putting an eCommerce platform at the center is the wrong way to effectively manage product information for omnichannel use.

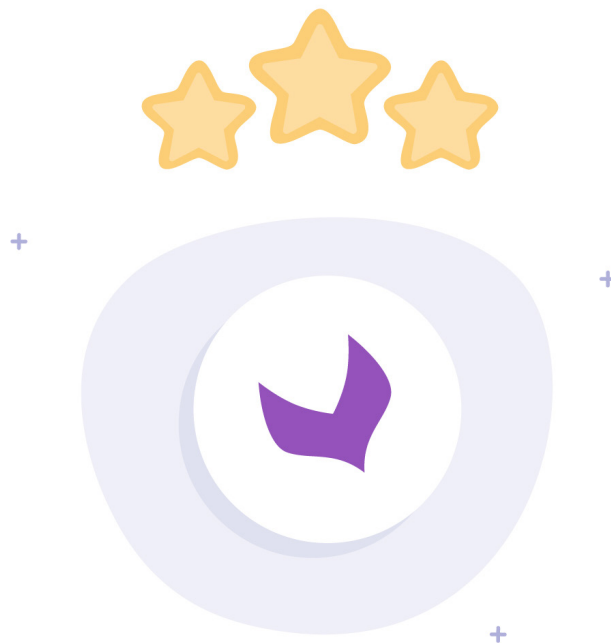
Additionally, if you want to also deploy product information in a print catalog, through your point of sale system, or on mobile applications to complement your own web store, you'll need to alter that product information for the correct context for those channels. This can be a real headache, as each channel has its own rules about what information is required, how big the fields are, what kind of images are supported, and so on. Trying to manage the requirements for other channels from within your eCommerce platform is going to be difficult at best, impossible at worst.

In the context of an eCommerce platform migration, there are both operational and strategic reasons to introduce a PIM solution concurrent with the migration.

Operationally, there is the issue of cut-over from the old platform to the new one. If all the product information in your legacy eCommerce instance has to be duplicated in the new eCommerce instance, it will essentially be "frozen" while you prepare the rest of the upgrade. Handling changes to your assortment or adding newly discovered or added product information will quickly become a manual burden that positions your upgrade for delays and problems at go-live.

To overcome this, you can draw on a PIM to enrich and re-export your product information from your legacy eCommerce platform to the new one. This helps ensure your new eCommerce platform is fully stocked with comprehensive, accurate product information and images you need to create that emotional bond with buyers. Strategically, adopting a PIM at the start of your new eCommerce platform deployment will accelerate and ease the migration process while positioning you for easier future expansion and growth. Once you're up and running, your PIM will complement features by transforming internal processes and providing the capabilities to expand to new markets and beyond.

By combining the power of PIM with the updated capabilities offered by your new eCommerce platform, you can better maximize your digital commerce success – and see results much more quickly.



# Five ways Akeneo PIM can help with your eCommerce migration

Akeneo PIM can make the process of implementing your new eCommerce platform much faster and less challenging. By putting PIM at the center, you can decouple product information management processes from individual sales channels while also making it easier to meet the needs of individual channels and allowing work to be allocated to the correct teams outside of IT.

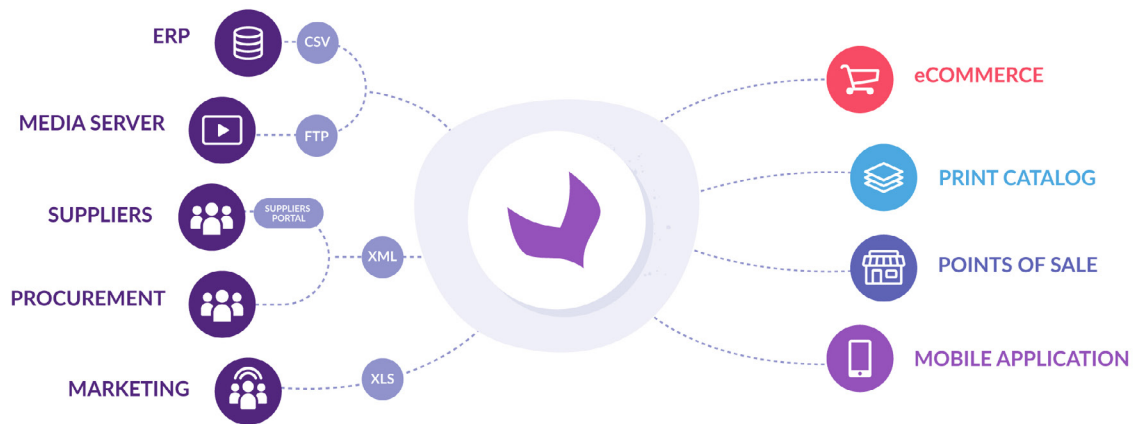


Figure 2: The right way to effectively manage product information: The PIM sits between raw product content and product information ready for sale in every channel

Here are five ways that Akeneo PIM can help make your migration efforts go over without a hitch:

## Make it easy

Akeneo PIM is designed to make the process of managing product information easier than ever before. Organizations using Akeneo PIM can complete the migration process by simply importing product data from your legacy eCommerce platform to Akeneo, enriching the data, and exporting it to your new eCommerce platform. This helps accelerate and ease the migration process compared to companies who make the switch without a PIM. Akeneo PIM removes the work of managing raw product data from within your eCommerce platform and enables you to more easily assign that work to teams who may not need to work directly in your eCommerce instance, allowing you more resource allocation options.

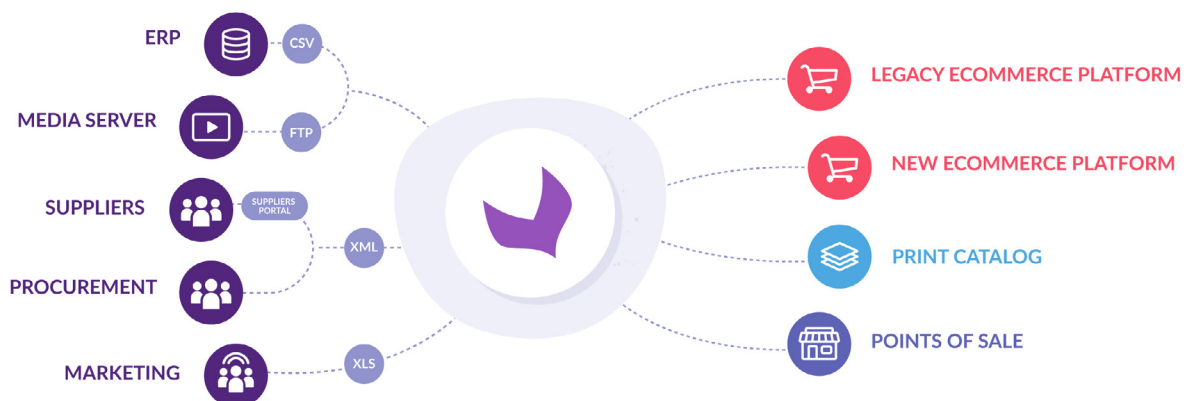


Figure 3: Having the PIM feed two eCommerce platforms at the same time allows you to decide when to decommission your legacy eCommerce platform without shutting down your store.

Using Akeneo PIM as the centralized point of managing product information also means you can run your live legacy eCommerce platform shop in parallel with your new eCommerce platform by simply defining the two as different channels within the PIM. This way, you can continue to update products in your legacy instance and, when you are ready to bring your new platform live, you'll have already added the accurate and comprehensive product information into your new instance. This deployment strategy allows you to significantly reduce the risk in your new eCommerce platform evolution. Furthermore, you'll be able to continue to serve your other channels without breaking any of those channels that were previously dependent on product information sourced in the eCommerce platform.

### Ditch the duct tape

Enriching data is a critical step in delivering high-quality product information. You want to ensure you aren't leaving gaps in product data with missing information — or worse, giving customers inaccurate or inconsistent product information.

Companies that do not use a PIM tend to have cumbersome enrichment processes that involve juggling data across their ERP, CRM, homegrown databases, endless marketing spreadsheets, and other systems, including their eCommerce site. When a company without a PIM tries to manage all this information in systems that aren't designed to handle it, they inevitably build out complex, contrived business processes that are time-consuming and error-prone (like creating a SKU manually in multiple places at once). By using Akeneo PIM, you can stop applying these temporary “duct tape” work-arounds to product data in multiple places, and instead, use that time to enrich product data in Akeneo PIM — and launch the new eCommerce platform with a clean database.

### Implement good data governance

Once your data is clean, correct, and complete, you need to institute good data governance policies and processes. While this may seem like an overwhelming task in and of itself, it's crucial to offering customers a compelling experience. Doing so, however, requires a solid foundation of high-quality product data — which you can't begin to build without a proper data governance policy. Akeneo PIM includes out-of-the-box capabilities that help govern your product data through user rights and roles management, validation workflows, versioning, and more.

Proper data governance often results in better SEO performance and associated data analytics. By creating a data governance structure and using the PIM to control it, you can ensure the best quality information is on your site — for example, making sure old products are retired, new assortments are listed on time, images are up to date, and SEO terms are populated and tracked on a regular basis. This can help drive an increase in conversions.

### Boost efficiency and productivity

With good data governance in place, your team should begin to realize the potential of your PIM — especially when it comes to productivity. Your eCommerce platform is not a place designed for marketers to work deeply on enriching product information. Akeneo PIM, however, is designed to help eliminate the menial, repetitive tasks involved in product data standardization, categorization, and enrichment activities, leaving marketers free to focus on creating that emotional connection with buyers by adding compelling product descriptions, images, and more.

What's more, Akeneo PIM also comes packed with features designed to improve and automate these repetitive processes, and offers data validation workflows to ensure product information is of the highest quality prior to publication to your webshop. This helps save you time without sacrificing complete and accurate product information, while organizing your team in the most efficient and productive way.

### Ease expansion efforts

With automated workflow and improved processes in place, your organization can begin to use Akeneo PIM to widen your horizon and expand internationally. Akeneo PIM includes localization and translation features designed to make cross-border expansion effortless. You can also seamlessly open new channels, embracing omnichannel commerce while improving your customer experience by providing a compelling product experience all across your channels.



# Using Akeneo PIM to unlock growth

Your evolution to a new eCommerce platform is a big enough project without having to worry about managing disparate product data spread across your enterprise, much less information coming from third parties like suppliers. With Akeneo PIM, however, you can accelerate your migration process, reduce the risk associated with trying to juggle managing product information while upgrading your new eCommerce platform, run your legacy and new eCommerce instances in parallel while you prepare to transition, and unlock future growth for your organization.

Key features in Akeneo that mitigate the challenges and increase the benefits of evolving your eCommerce platform include:

- A marketer-centric user interface that empowers those with the product knowledge to play an active role in delivering complete and accurate product information that builds an emotional connection with customers.
- A teamwork assistant that tracks product information completeness by channel and locale, keeping your teams on task and focused.
- A business rules engine to help automate tedious, repetitive, manual tasks to boost productivity, and a validation workflow to ensure only high-quality product information is released.
- Support for managing digital assets and non-product entities such as designers, manufacturers, brands, and more to help build your brand, build trust, and give customers the relevant and complete information they need to feel confident in their purchase decision.
- Support for product models and variants, multiple catalogs, and categorization, so you can easily create custom assortments and manage SKUs that vary by color, size, etc.
- User roles and granular permissions so you can better govern and control who can do what in your PIM.
- Versioning and publication control so you can have work-in-progress catalog updates, without impacting your production web shop.
- Product data intelligence capabilities to help make sure you're using all product data available for the best possible product experience.
- An optional supplier onboarder application that allows suppliers to provide product information directly in the format you need to effectively feed your web shop.

Akeneo PIM has a long history with eCommerce platforms, and is the best choice for managing product information for customers looking to deliver a unified omnichannel commerce strategy. In addition to these powerful PIM capabilities, Akeneo also offers and supports a premium connector to Adobe Magento 2 and Salesforce Commerce Cloud. Connectors' API-based integrations are fast, efficient, and scalable, meaning that product data generated in Akeneo PIM, including categories, families, attributes, products and product models, can be exported to the eCommerce platform with ease.



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