Cycle Time

Michael Moon

is President of GISTICS and a lecturer and leading authority on digital asset management, automation of marketing services and multichannel brands. He has delivered more than 300 keynotes, presentations, executive seminars, workshops and web-based seminars around the world. His book *Firebrands: Building Brand Loyalty in the Internet Age* has been published in 13 different languages. He also conducts primary research through surveys and one-to-one interviews. Michael and his team advise international-brand corporations on multichannel strategies for brand management and digital asset management, including Amway, Boeing, Disney, Frank Russell Company, Gap, General Motors, FCB, Hallmark, Hasbro, Leo Burnett, Nokia, Sanoma WSOY, TeliaSonera, Thomson Corporation, VF Corp and Warner Bros.

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In past columns, we have explored many aspects of digital asset management (DAM), including many facets of what we call *digital value chains* or *digital supply chains*. Today we will examine what differentiates these two chains.

Let's start with a brilliant summation of context by Peter Drucker, noted management guru and theorist.

There is only one purpose of the firm: to find and serve customers. Only two capabilities create wealth: marketing and innovation. All else is cost.

Like a North Star for those navigating their way through the Northern hemisphere, that one declaration frames the context of DAM: add value to marketing or innovation, or face the crushing pressures of cost reduction or lay-offs.

In this context, *supply chains* consist of several independent business operations that produce raw materials or components and deliver them to a business customer that adds distinctive value in the form of a more finalized product or integrated offering. Eventually, a completed offering (usually integrating products and services) to the end-use customer at the end of the supply chain: consumers, businesses or public sector organizations.

Value chains work in a similar way. Except value chains describe *how* organization or small group of firms creates value. Supply chain describes *what* each organization or group produces and sells or provides to a customer next in line.

Thus, value chains provide a great way to depict the digital technologies of a content

supply chain. Figure 1 depicts a value chain for publishing technology.

Each bubble refers to an operational capability that most readers will find self-explanatory with the possible exception of digital embassies. Adobe Flash and PDF, Apple QuickTime and iTunes, and Microsoft Media Player all represent “sovereign states” licensed and deployed within desktops and handhelds (sovereign states of end users and businesses).

The web no longer constitutes a channel or distribution system. This evolved into a business ecosystem — a collection of digital businesses and actors that create and deliver value in new, faster and more powerful ways. In ways not envisioned by Peter Drucker, innovation and marketing have converged, becoming indistinguishable in the eyes of customers and external stakeholders.

In practical terms, DAM enables IT leaders to develop and launch digital brands and helps marketing leaders to provision self-service applications and brand interactions to end-use customers and stakeholders. Digital value chains for content and self-services provide a bridge for IT and marketing.

Figure 2 depicts the digital value chains for content and self-services.

Brandspace refers to how consumers organize constellations of brands into rings of trust. *Engagement theaters* describe the function of next-generation web content management systems, addressing the user interaction and engagement needs of multiple stakeholders. This includes faceted search, dynamic just-for-me

Michael Moon
GISTICS Inc
4171 Piedmont Avenue
#210, Oakland, CA 94611,
USA
E-mail: info@gistics.com

Figure 1: Value chain for publishing

Figure 2: Digital value chain for content

navigation features and content personalization that renders every page of a large site as a “personalized home page.”

The term *theater* nicely summarizes “beyond user experience” — that multiple user types have different types of relationships and consumption or engagement criteria that evolve through known and predictable stages — such as a three or five act play. Engagement theaters also call attention to the fact that the sponsors —

each with their marketing operations supply chain — will provision both content and interactive engagement services into brandspace. More on this idea later!

Content optimization refers to the tagging of each page or graphic using a faceted taxonomy and a text mining engine, creating topic maps or ontologies addressing likely intentions to view similar pages or graphics — same or related people, products, technologies, places,

organizations, time-frames or concepts such as “markets” or “happiness.”

Content refineries refer to editorial repositories using XML schemas, style sheets and specialized ingest engines to reprocess Word.docs, InDesign files, PDFs and XML feeds. These specialized ingestion engines deconstruct large, formatted, multi-page documents into small, fully profile “smart content subassemblies” — independent objects that automated systems can flow into print publishing or online systems without losing metadata, formatting and copy text.

Multimedia editorial operation refers to a new way of creating print and online publications: create and publish to a database, not a target or end-point format. It also means that editors may

compose articles using audio or video assets for online versions and another class of assets for DVDs or CD-ROMs.

Multimedia asset management refers to the next-generation DAM repository, automating the intake of third-party ads and content, including user-generated content from blogs, forums, web posting and social networks. This also emphasizes specialized search spiders, syndication capabilities and clearance procedures.

Scheduling and collaboration workspace refers to a new set of capabilities for communicating and collaborating with content-generating communities.

In future columns we will explore social media operations, the newest and most dynamic value chain to emerge!