Cycle Time

Moving beyond the repository

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In previous columns, we have explored the emergence of content supply chains and, in particular, supply chains for marketing operations and customer engagement.

In this column, we will explore the evolutionary phases of DAM into what we have begun calling *integrated rich-media services* and *managed supply chains*, summarizing our observations and client work over the span 14 years.

In particular, we will examine the *seven basis phases of DAM in a marketing operation*, retracing the steps that thousands of firms have taken or will take as they develop a more mature and efficient DAM operations.

We will also use this evolutionary model to address a few of the key issues associated with a major upgrade or migration.

LONG MARCH

With respect to their DAM systems, many executives in various marketing and advertising groups confront these basic options:

- *Muddle along with Sharepoint* and backend media servers, enabling users to create a chaotic group of projects with ineffective cross-project search of assets. In some cases, firms integrate an enterprise search platform or appliance to all these Sharepoint project room and media objects, hoping to auto-classify and catalog content into logical groupings.
- *Buy a new more powerful DAM system*, making it an effective company-wide shared 'library' and image portal. This includes hiring a junior DAM services manager or contractor to manage a library of 1500 or more assets and the day-to-day operations of ingesting and tagging 20 or more new assets per day.

- *Extend an implemented DAM system* into creative workflows and into client service or field marketing, engaging a consulting firm who has done this before and hire a senior DAM services director to manage a 10000-plus item archive and 100-plus users.
- *Add other media service capabilities to the DAM* such as rough-cut video through a browser, automated collateral building, and branded microsites for products or partners, engaging a senior DAM services director to hire and manage a systems integration and consulting firm.
- *Start over with SaaS (Software as a Service)-based marketing process management platform* that will optimize the creation and delivery of *integrated campaigns or multichannel direct marketing*, incorporating DAM and media applications at little or no added cost

All five of these options represent an acceptable strategy. Each requires a level of investment and will deliver a corresponding return.

LOGICAL PROGRESSIONS

Figure 1 depicts a common progression for many DAM systems in a marketing operation, outlining a set of self-evident business requirements and key functions.

In our annual survey of DAM users, we find the many corporate DAM systems stall as an Image and Content Portal. In large part, these systems stall owing to inadequate approvals workflow and the lack of a marketing claims database – a structured XML database for building and maintaining 'one version of truth' for their *products* (a product master), *customer relationships* (a customer master), *approved copy-written material* (a claims master) and *publishing templates* (a publication master).

Maturity Levels	PROJECT PORTAL	DAM SYSTEMS		INTEGRATED RICH-MEDIA SERVICES		MANAGED SUPPLY CHAIN
	Named Solution	Image and Content Portal	Creative Workflow DAM	Distributed Media Workflows	Smart Marcomm Operations	Federated Marketing Operations
Business requirements	Share files and collaborate within team Sharepoint, Basecamp, @task, Lotus Notes	Find marketing content and reusable media components using simple keywords and nested folders	Streamline creation and production processes for artwork, CGI photo replacements, collateral, packaging, POP displays, and multimodal detailing packages	Provision content and media applications to users across enterprise and partner, creating process benchmarks Lower agency switching costs and service interruptions	Speed delivery of brand-consistent multimedia materials through structured, online processes Lower sourcing costs of creative, content, and production	Synchronize global product launches and integrated multichannel campaigns using multiple centers of excellence in marketing communications
	Key functions	Browser or desktop access to intranet or public portal	Structured catalogs with basic metadata and search	Integration with creative tools, works of process, approval workflows, and marketing claims databases	Multiple user classes, faceted taxonomies, agency governance model, dynamic imaging and publishing of collateral (smart artwork)	MRM capabilities: planning, campaigns, analytics, Automation pan-regional localization serving multiple businesses and markets
						Pan-regional execution of print, broadcast, online, mobile, and in-field promotions and customer engagement

Figure 1: Phases of DAM capabilities.

Besides the technical limitation of many DAMs to automate the creative workflows, moving into integrated rich-media services requires a strong DAM services director and, more often than not, executive sponsorship of DAM strategy with sufficient payback to justify the added investment.

Ad agency management and vendor consolidation in the marketing supply chain often provide the business case – and the subject on our next cycle time!