



The Ultimate PIM Buyer's Guide for Shopify Users

How to Select the Right System



Who should read this ebook

As of right now, Shopify is being used to host well over [4 million stores](#) around the web. If you've downloaded this ebook, chances are it's because you're either part of the action or you want to be.

That's understandable, considering this titan of ecommerce has seen an [estimated \\$755 billion in sales](#) since its inception in 2006, but for all its might and impressive figures, Shopify isn't actually perfect. While it's got a bunch of great features that have helped to make it the [third most popular ecommerce platform in the world](#), it's not designed to be the main place where you store your product data.

If you're one of the more than [2 million merchants](#) that are already using this platform, then you've probably already noticed some of the following issues:

- + Attribute and image limitations
- + Rudimentary bulk editing options
- + Restrictive naming and format requirements
- + Cross-border commerce complications
- + Duplicated data sets and media

That's why more and more Shopify retailers are starting to use specialized software for product information management, or PIM. PIM software lets Shopify users avoid all of these issues, and also provides a wide range of additional extra features that take out a large chunk of the hassle of managing a successful Shopify store.

This guide is for Shopify users who are ready to take the plunge into PIM software. In it, we'll do our best to help you understand why PIM matters, how it can benefit you, what Shopify-related features to look for and questions to ask when you're shopping for PIM

software, and how to compare some of the top PIM providers when it comes to helping you along your Shopify journey.

Whether you choose to invest in Plytix's user-friendly and affordable [PIM software](#) or one of the other options on the market—we're always on call to help you [unlock the power of your products](#). Let's get started.



| Table of contents

What is PIM?	4
What is a PIM system?	5
Why do Shopify sellers need a PIM system?	6
How will my Shopify store benefit from PIM?	8
The 3 key features of a Shopify PIM tool: Direct integration, attribute mapping, and metafield support	10
How data and PIM support the Shopify customer journey	13
What other features should I look for in a PIM system for Shopify?	14
Your whole team can benefit from PIM software	15
9 more questions to ask when selecting a PIM system for your Shopify business	16
Popular PIM solutions for Shopify sellers	19
Case Study: How Browze cut their time-to-market in half using PIM	27
Choosing the right PIM software with confidence	28

What is PIM?

Product information management (PIM) is the practice of **collecting, centralizing, refining, maintaining, and often distributing all the consumer-facing information and data needed to successfully market and sell products.**

If you haven't heard of PIM, it's likely you've at least heard of a similar practice like master data management (MDM), product lifecycle management (PLM), or product resource management (PRM).

While it's not important what your organization calls it, it is important that you have a PIM system in place if you're trying to manage all the necessary product information and attributes for your Shopify store in an efficient way.

In fact, American market research company Forrester says digital businesses are now attaching as many as 200 attributes to every single product. In what the report calls a "content arms race," the winner will

be the one who can keep millions of attributes fresh, unique, and accurate across not just their Shopify store(s), but also all their other relevant advertising platforms, price comparison websites, social media, and more.

PIM software empowers merchants to make selling through Shopify (and everywhere else) easier, by providing a single source of truth from which their entire team can collect always-accurate product information and assets to enrich and optimize distribution across their Shopify stores and any other sales and marketing channels.

Unlike the default data fields in Shopify, which come with limited, fixed options, PIM software can store almost any information pertaining to your products, including the description, pricing, configuration, shipping, logistics, taxation, reviews, and more. And good PIM software (which we'll dive into later) can help your team organize product information in nearly endless configurations to provide a better

experience for marketers, merchants, and customers—it's a great way to get around Shopify's issues with variants and product hierarchies.

"Digital businesses are now attaching as many as 200 attributes to every single product."

- *The Forrester Wave™*

What is a PIM system?

A platform that helps businesses centralize, enrich, and share all their product information



Why do Shopify sellers need a PIM system?



To understand why PIM software is so essential for Shopify sellers, all we really have to do is look at selling on Shopify without it.

Some other platforms provide automated options for getting product information into stores and keeping it up-to-date once it's there, such as fetching information from an automated feed generated in Google Sheets or elsewhere. Shopify, however, doesn't give its users this option, which means non-PIM users are left with two options:

Option #1: Adding and updating data in Shopify directly

In theory, this sounds like it could be the simplest option. You're using Shopify to power your stores, so why not just add your product information there directly, and then update it yourself whenever necessary?

There's a simple answer for this simple question: **Time**. Unless you're only selling a handful of products that have incredibly simple product information, trying to manually add product details

and media for each of them to Shopify yourself is going to take you forever.

It's not a one-time thing, either. Any time you want to add a new product or multiple new products, that's a load more manual data entry on your part. On top of that, whenever you need to change any details about your products, like adjusting prices or updating product descriptions, that's another manual task for you to take care of. What's more, while Shopify does have some bulk editing capabilities, they're certainly not on the same level as those provided by quality PIM software.

Option #2: Manually uploading a CSV

So if you don't want to manually add your products to Shopify one by one, what else can you do? Well, that's where the CSV upload option comes in. Again, this sounds pretty simple in theory—after all, a CSV is basically just a spreadsheet, and people have been using spreadsheets to store product information forever, so it must be a solid choice, right? **Wrong.**

Why do Shopify sellers need a PIM system? (continued)

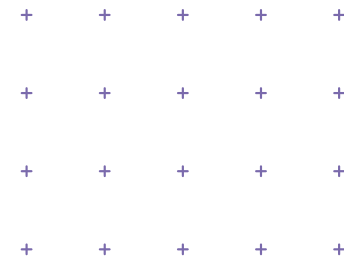
The fact is that when it comes to storing, optimizing, organizing, and distributing your data, spreadsheets just don't cut it any more. We'll talk more about why that is in just a minute, but for now let's delve into the **particular problems sellers encounter when using a manual CSV upload** to get product information into Shopify.

Firstly, as you may have already noticed, Shopify can be very particular about certain things, and this is no exception. You'll need to get the **official Shopify CSV template** to use as your starting point, and copy your data across into there—yet more time spent manually copying and pasting. Obviously, the naming conventions and formatting of this template are only applicable to Shopify, which means you won't be able to use this copy of your data for any other platforms or systems that you might be using.

This creates what we call a data silo—an isolated version of your product information that's not automatically synced with any other versions of your data out there. That means any updates or edits to your information will have to be made to that CSV manually, and that you'll then have to take the new version of the CSV over to Shopify and push the update through there yourself.

Basically, while this method may be faster than adding and editing data in Shopify directly, it can still be a **slow and difficult process** if you're not careful.





How will my Shopify store benefit from PIM?

So, we've seen what selling on Shopify without PIM is like—here's what you'll get when you implement this tech.

Faster data uploading

As we've seen, getting your data into Shopify can be daunting, especially when you have a large inventory of products. PIM takes this job off your hands by facilitating swift, direct data uploads. Instead of manually entering data or wrestling with cumbersome CSV files, sellers can rely on the efficiency of a PIM tool to quickly populate their Shopify account with their product information, whenever they need.

Automatic scheduled updates

The dynamic nature of ecommerce means that most Shopify sellers have to update their product information on a pretty regular basis. Whether it's adjusting prices, updating product

descriptions, or adding new items, maintaining fresh and accurate data is crucial. With a PIM system, sellers can set up a recurring schedule for these updates in advance, ensuring that their store remains current without the constant need to go in and manually make changes yourself.

Better-controlled data input (and more accurate data as a result)

Mistakes in product descriptions, pricing, or specifications are expensive—that's why data accuracy is so important in the world of ecommerce. Not only does inaccurate product information lead to increased unnecessary spending on returns, it can also stop customers from trusting your brand, which ultimately leads to lost sales. PIM systems come equipped with features that validate data upon input, such as setting a fixed list of possible input options, helping to catch and

rectify errors before they reach your Shopify store. This proactive approach guarantees that your customers are always going to get reliable and accurate product information.

Improved collaboration and accountability

As your Shopify business grows, it's likely you'll end up with multiple individuals or even external suppliers contributing to data entry. A PIM system provides an oversight of what everyone's doing, allowing administrators to monitor and regulate all the data coming into your system from all your different sources. This makes it much easier to ensure that everything meets your standards and that any discrepancies are dealt with quickly.

How will my Shopify store benefit from PIM?

(continued)

Enhanced bulk editing options

Sometimes, changes need to be made to a large number of products simultaneously. Instead of making these changes one by one or using Shopify's often overly limited functions, PIM systems offer advanced bulk editing options. This feature is a lifesaver for sellers during sales, promotions, or when updating a particular line of products, making mass edits efficient and hassle-free.

Data optimization and distribution for other channels

While Shopify is a powerful platform, many sellers also operate on other channels. PIM doesn't just let you optimize data for Shopify—it prepares it for distribution across multiple platforms, ensuring consistency and

reducing the workload for sellers who decide to branch out into other areas and markets.

Higher number of variants

Shopify has a set limit on the number of product variants one can add—100 per product, to be precise. If you just use Shopify, then there's no way around this, since according to Shopify, "the variant limit of 100 variants per product cannot be raised for any account or plan." PIM systems, however, offer a workaround that lets you literally triple this limit, giving sellers much greater

flexibility when showcasing products and letting you cater to a far broader range of customer preferences.

Basically, a PIM system acts as the backbone for Shopify sellers, ensuring that their stores remain efficient, accurate, and competitive in an ever-evolving ecommerce landscape. However, in order for all of these benefits to be applied to your store, there are three essential features that your PIM tool needs to make them all possible.



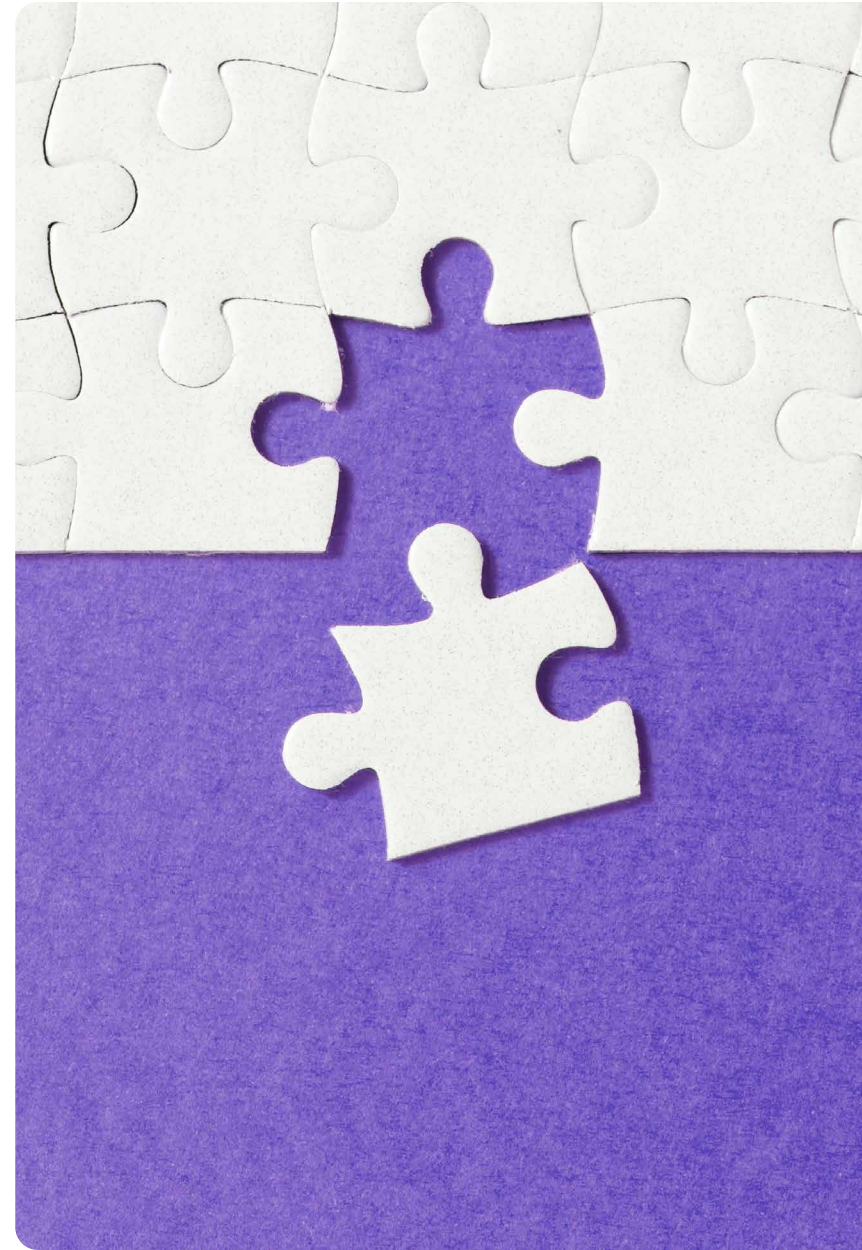
The 3 key features of a PIM tool for Shopify

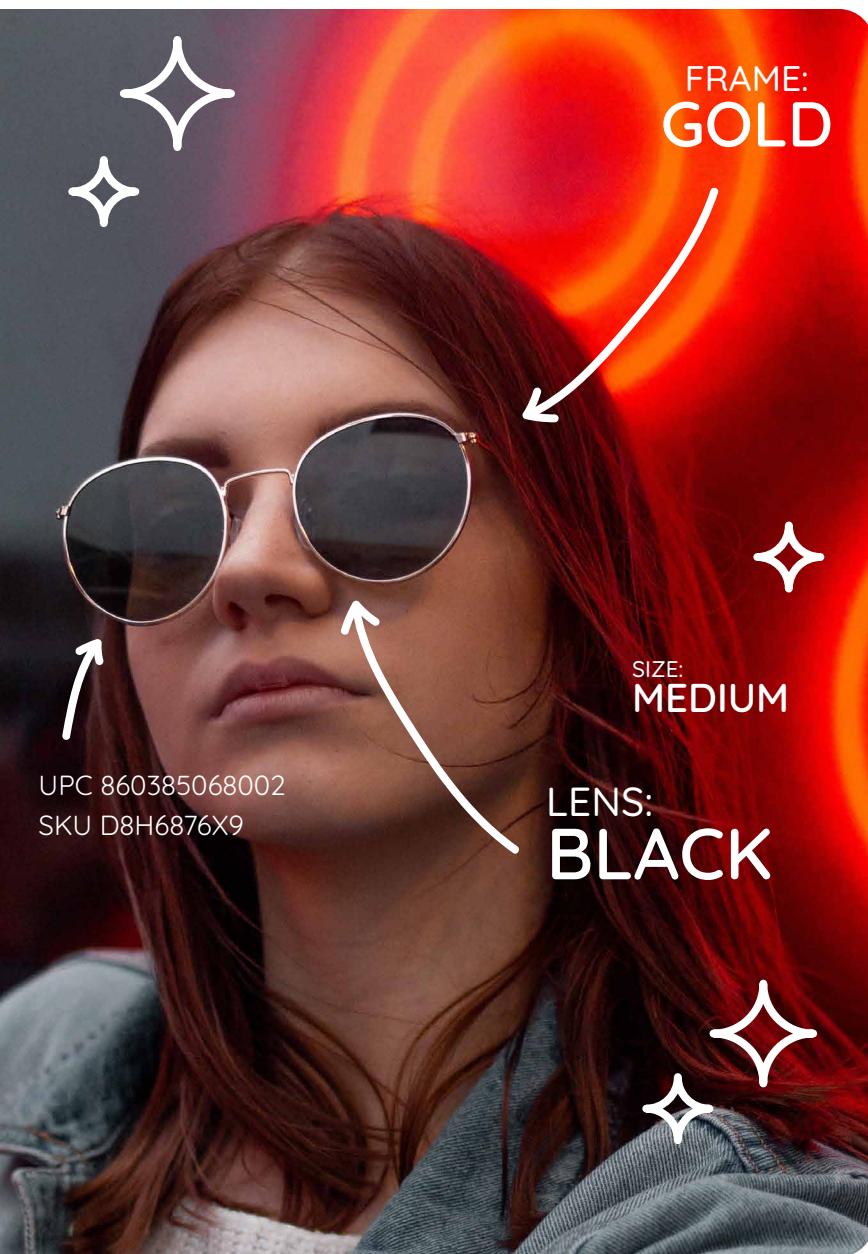
1 Direct Integration: Connecting your PIM tool to Shopify directly

For a Shopify seller, direct integration is probably the most important feature to look for in a PIM tool—it's what gives the software the power to read and edit product data in Shopify directly.

This is crucial for the majority of the benefits of combining PIM and Shopify, as without this, you're back to square one, a.k.a. having to get your PIM tool to export your data as a CSV that you then take over to Shopify yourself. That means no scheduled updates, more work for you, and a much higher likelihood of out-of-date product information due to human error.

When it comes to online selling, the more of the process that you can automate the better. A direct integration with Shopify lets sellers streamline their workflow and focus on managing their product information in one central location (the PIM) without the hassle of juggling multiple platforms. This can be a game-changer for sellers who want to scale their business and expand onto new platforms in the future.





The 3 key features of a PIM tool for Shopify (continued)

2 Attribute Mapping: Matching Shopify formatting without having to edit your original data

Speaking of different platforms, one of the major challenges of managing product information is making sure that data is consistent everywhere that you sell. Each ecommerce platform, including Shopify, has its own unique way of defining and structuring product attributes, like how Shopify calls product names “Handles” as opposed to “Titles,” “Labels,” “Names,” or anything else. This is where attribute mapping shines, even if you’re only selling on Shopify.

Attribute mapping allows sellers to set up rules that automatically rename and reformat their attributes to match the names and formats required by Shopify, but without changing the original version of their data. This means you can maintain a standardized dataset in your PIM using whatever system makes sense for you, and still meet the unique requirements of Shopify and any other platform you sell on. Your team will thank you for this—after all, you might be used to Shopify’s way of referring to different attributes, but that doesn’t mean everyone in every other department has got such a good *Handle* on things.

The 3 key features of a PIM tool for Shopify (continued)

It's a great bit of future-proofing too, as even if you're only selling through Shopify at the moment, you may well choose to expand onto other platforms in the future. Each of them will likely have their own formatting and naming conventions too, and this function will let you deal with all of them with ease. It's all about building a sustainable and scalable infrastructure for growth.

3 Metafield Support: Dealing with Shopify's system for custom attributes

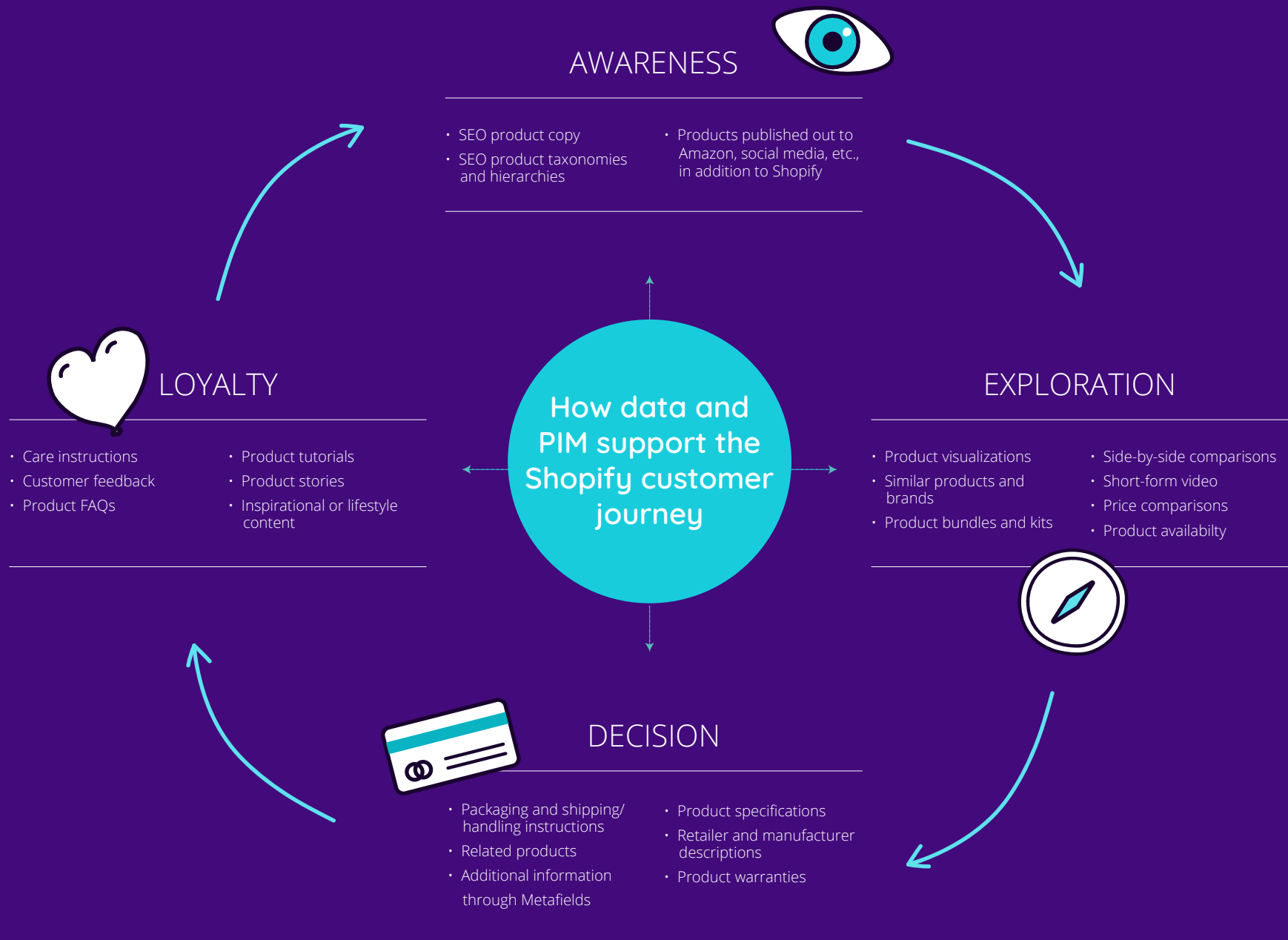
Shopify's metafields are custom fields that allow merchants to add additional product information, and they're particularly useful for adding specifications, care instructions, or any other data that doesn't fit into Shopify's default product details. Sounds simple enough, right? But not every PIM system has the capability to process them, which limits the data their users can send to their Shopify stores.

With metafield support in your PIM, you can seamlessly push custom product data to Shopify. This allows sellers to provide richer product details, improving the customer experience and potentially boosting sales. It also makes sure that your PIM can accommodate any custom data, no matter how

specific, allowing you to cater to niche markets or offer unique products with ease.

Managing metafields through a PIM lets sellers maintain centralized control over this custom data. Any updates or changes to metafields can be executed in the PIM and instantly synced to Shopify, ensuring that the store remains consistent and up-to-date.





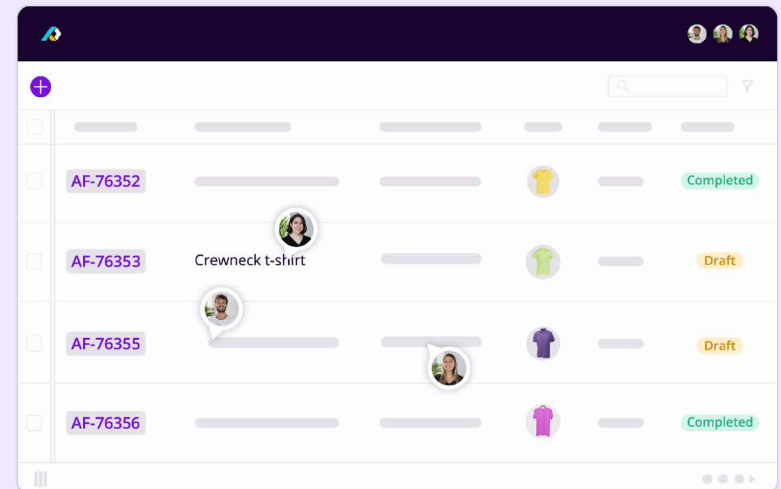
What other features should I look for in a PIM system?

The core functionality of PIM software is to work with Shopify and every other platform you touch to automatically retrieve and display the most up-to-date information when a customer is shopping for your products. To achieve this goal, **here are some other key features you want to make sure your PIM system has (or is):**

- ✓ Centralized, media-neutral data management
- ✓ Highly configurable and flexible
- ✓ Management, maintenance, transfer, and output of product information
- ✓ Management of communication, purchasing, and production data
- ✓ Cross-media use of stored product information
- ✓ Support for content supply chain system workflows, and printed and online publications
- ✓ Automated generation of online and offline target formats
- ✓ Integration with ERP and your other systems and databases
- ✓ Media, digital asset, and translation management

You can't forget about customer support as well. Shopify can get pretty technical, and so can some aspects of PIM software. Choosing a [PIM company that's well-known for high-quality customer support](#) will make your life a lot easier at all points in the process—whether it's by doing your onboarding for you or providing a dedicated support agent to stay by your side throughout your Shopify journey.

For a simpler way to launch products faster, establish cross-channel coherence, create rich content, manage a range of digital assets, and overall master your product content—all with a straightforward month-to-month subscription and no hidden fees—[try Plytix](#).



Your whole team can benefit from PIM software

The benefits don't stop at what PIM can do—here's **who on your team** can benefit!

Easy-to-use PIM software gives **sales teams** accurate product data and materials they can access on the go. **Ecommerce managers** are able to keep products up to date to improve conversion rates while **customer support representatives** can access information with ease to ensure accurate service.

Marketing teams will have one less thing to juggle and, perhaps best of all, **your customers** will be empowered to buy with confidence knowing your Shopify store continues to be well stocked with quality information (and products!) they can rely on.



9 more questions to ask when selecting a PIM system for your Shopify business

In order for your PIM project to have a successful impact on your business, you can't just invest in the technology without asking the right questions to ensure it aligns with your goals and the processes you're willing to create or reshape to make PIM work for your unique needs.

Ask these questions to define what you want from a PIM solution, what good product management looks like to you, and what you need to do to achieve it:

1. Is the PIM system on-site or on the cloud?

On-premise PIM systems have to be hosted on your own computer or server—a requirement that smaller organizations without a well-rounded IT team might not be able to meet. [Cloud-based PIM](#) offered as software as a service (SaaS) is centrally hosted

and can be accessed on demand via a browser.

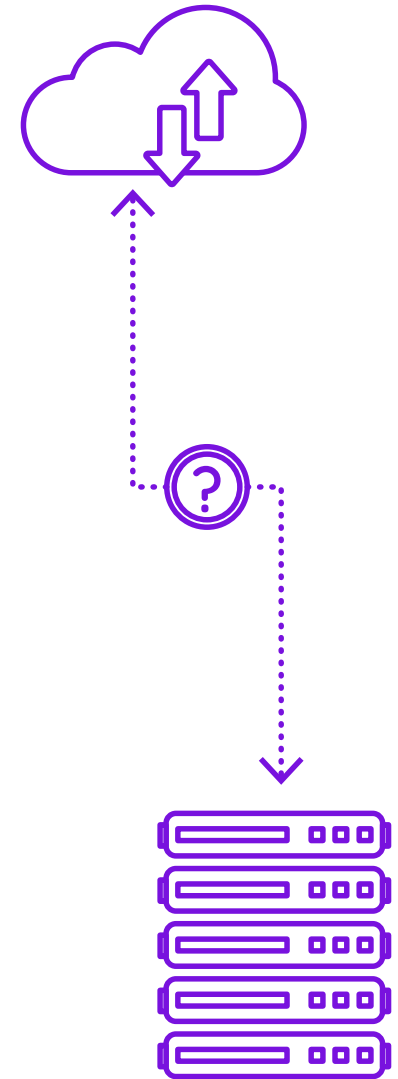
2. Will the PIM system allow me to upload and manage digital assets?

If you want to be able to keep data and images linked to the right product, choose a PIM system that comes with asset management. This will be especially important when media-heavy product descriptions are key to winning conversions—after all, a Shopify store without any images just isn't going to cut it.

3. What types of support packages are offered with this PIM tool?

Support levels can range from a DIY knowledge base to responsive live support. If you're new to PIM software—and especially if you're new to PIM practices altogether—be sure to choose

the level of support you'll need during the setup and maintenance of your tool.



9 more questions to ask when selecting a PIM system for your Shopify business (continued)

4. Where do I publish and distribute product data?

The more channels, formats, and languages in which you need to publish your content—the greater the case for a PIM system that's easy for your whole team to use. Be sure when choosing that it's capable of handling apps, product sheets, email marketing, and any other channels upon which you wish to distribute.

5. How complex is my product information?

It's not about the number of products—many PIM systems can handle a ton of those—it's about how complex the data around them is. Do your products come with a lot of information? Is the structure of that information important to maintain? Are the products highly

configurable? The more complex your product info, the more careful you should be that the PIM system you choose allows your team to manage it efficiently.

6. Where do I get product data from?

Kind of like the last question, you want to take stock of the number of sources from which your data comes, and how complicated each of them are. This will help ensure the PIM system you choose is capable of handling all your sources without causing your team to have to do a bunch of manual rewriting and entry.

7. How closely does my PIM system need to integrate with my ERP?

Much like PIM, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems use a singular database to store various types of data throughout an entire company. If you're already using an ERP system, it's likely you've been thinking about how, and how closely, to integrate PIM and ERP. The more of these questions you say "yes" to, the more likely it is you should plan for a tight integration of the two:

- + Should a product's life cycle start in ERP or in PIM?
- + Should ERP data (prices, inventory status, etc.) be visible in your PIM system?
- + Do you need to be able to maintain PIM data in ERP without opening your PIM tool?
- + Do you need to generate data sheets, or similar outputs, in ERP?



9 more questions to ask when selecting a PIM system for your Shopify business (continued)

8. What other workflows does PIM need to support and what processes can I develop to maximize its success?

Now that you have a tool that can actually handle a product content production and distribution workflow, it's time to take a look at the way you've been doing things to determine what needs to change and what processes can be adapted to make the most of your new PIM system.

New use cases and processes will very likely develop as you continue along the path to PIM enlightenment, but these fundamental considerations will give you a starting point:

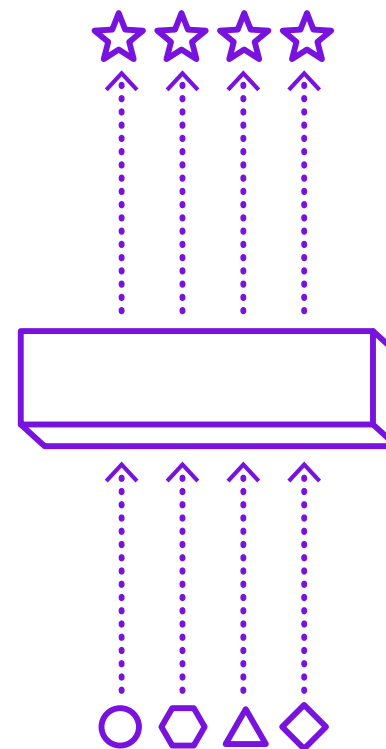
- + Who should interact with product information?
- + What should they be able to do?

- + How should they be able to do it?
- + When should they be able to do it?

9. Ultimately, what do I want my PIM system to achieve?

For PIM to impact overall business goals, it's important to develop key performance indicators to keep your PIM integration on track. These KPIs can vary widely by company, but they might look something like:

- + Aligning all products across all channels by a specific date
- + Reducing time to market by a certain percentage
- + Decreasing time spent updating product content by a set percentage
- + Establishing an easy onboarding process for products on each channel



Popular PIM solutions for Shopify sellers

Shopify merchants come in many shapes and sizes. Unfortunately, most of the top PIM software comes in one shape and size—very large and very expensive.

As more contemporary brands and retailers start using Shopify to break into the ecommerce game, feature-heavy PIM software with complicated workflows and expensive add-ons is becoming a thing of the past. You want something that's flexible and easy to use, easy to learn, and easy to add team members to as your business grows.

To help you choose the PIM solution that makes the most sense for businesses using Shopify, we put together a comparison of the five top PIM systems that come with Shopify integration: Salsify, Akeneo, Syndigo, Sales Layer, and Plytix.



Popular PIM solutions for Shopify sellers (continued)



DESCRIPTION

A feature-saturated, cloud-based solution, built and priced for large enterprises.

Built for large enterprises. Focused on providing a core system, with add-ons you can buy.

Described as a Content Experience Hub, Syndigo is a single-source network for managing and syndicating content.

COST

Salsify doesn't communicate their prices online, but after interviewing some of their clients, the lowest starting price encountered was **\$24,000 per year**.

Akeneo's Growth Plan includes access to their hosted PIM at a starting price of **\$25,000 per year**. They do offer a free version of their open source PIM—keep in mind this doesn't include the development resources needed to set up and install the software.

Syndigo does not provide pricing information on their website.

IDEAL CUSTOMER

Large enterprises with 500+ employees.

Large enterprises with 500+ employees.

Large enterprises with 500+ employees.

Popular PIM solutions for Shopify sellers (continued)



DESCRIPTION

A self-service, catalog management tool with big features that meet simplicity.

Plytix offers a simple to use and powerful PIM, designed and priced for all types and sizes of businesses.

COST

Sales Layer does not offer customers a free version, but there is an option of a free trial. The paid version starts at \$1,000/month.

Plytix offers a free version as well as a variety of paid plans. The paid plans range from €450/month to €1650/month and can be customized to whatever your business needs. All paid plans include file storage and unlimited users.

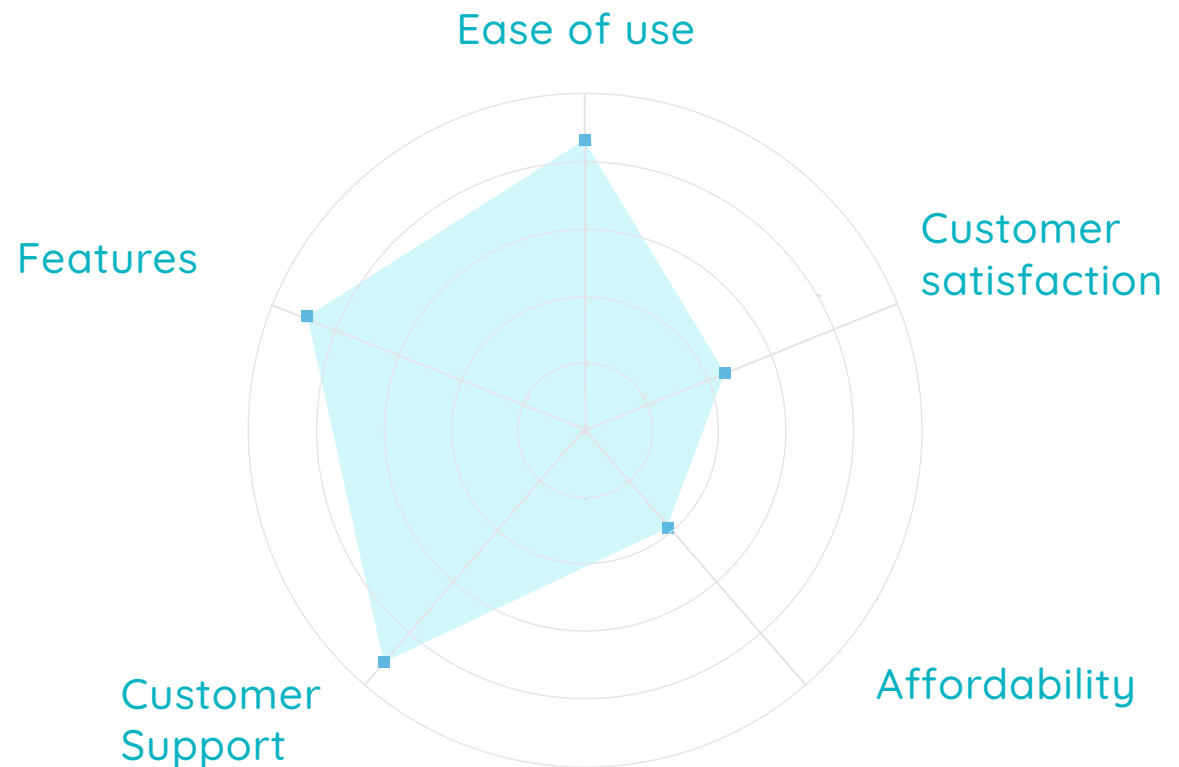
IDEAL CUSTOMER

All businesses, big or small.

All businesses, big or small.



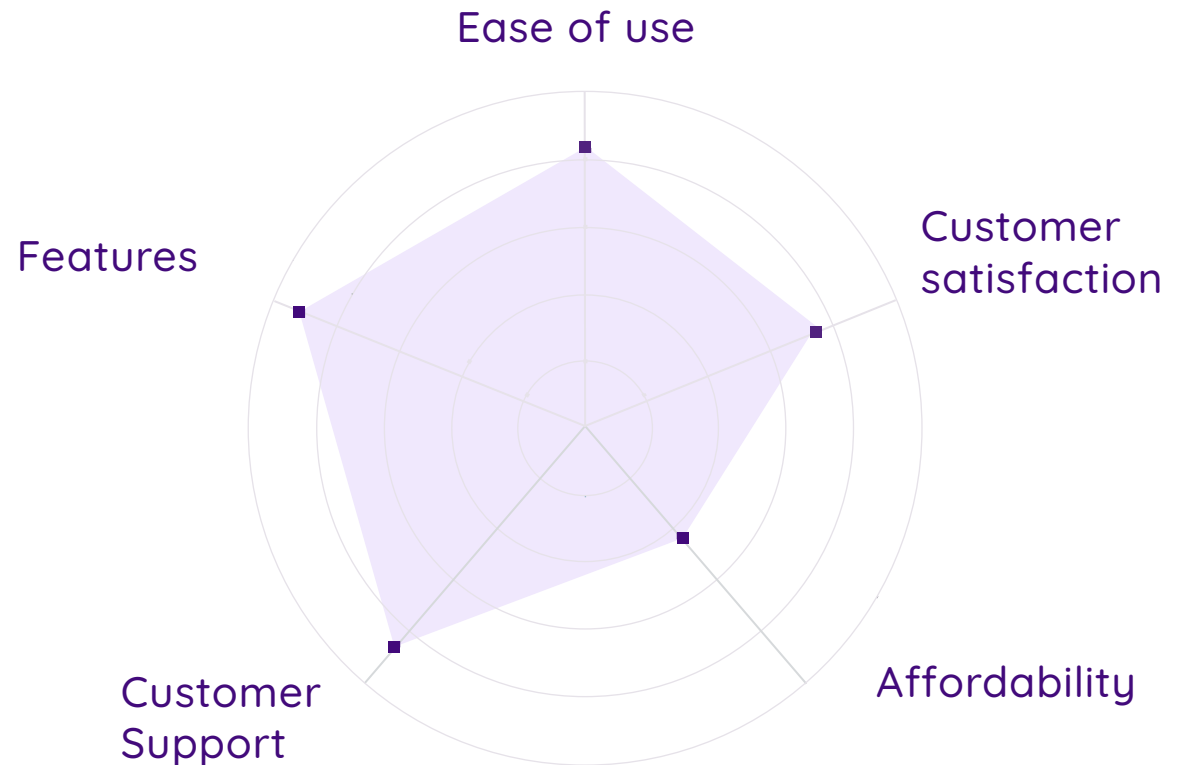
Salsify is a cloud-based Product Experience Management (PXM) tailored to large enterprises. Their main mission is to help big enterprises against the threat of newcomers—by helping them ‘win on the digital shelf.’



Customer Satisfaction scores based on G2 customer data, October 2023



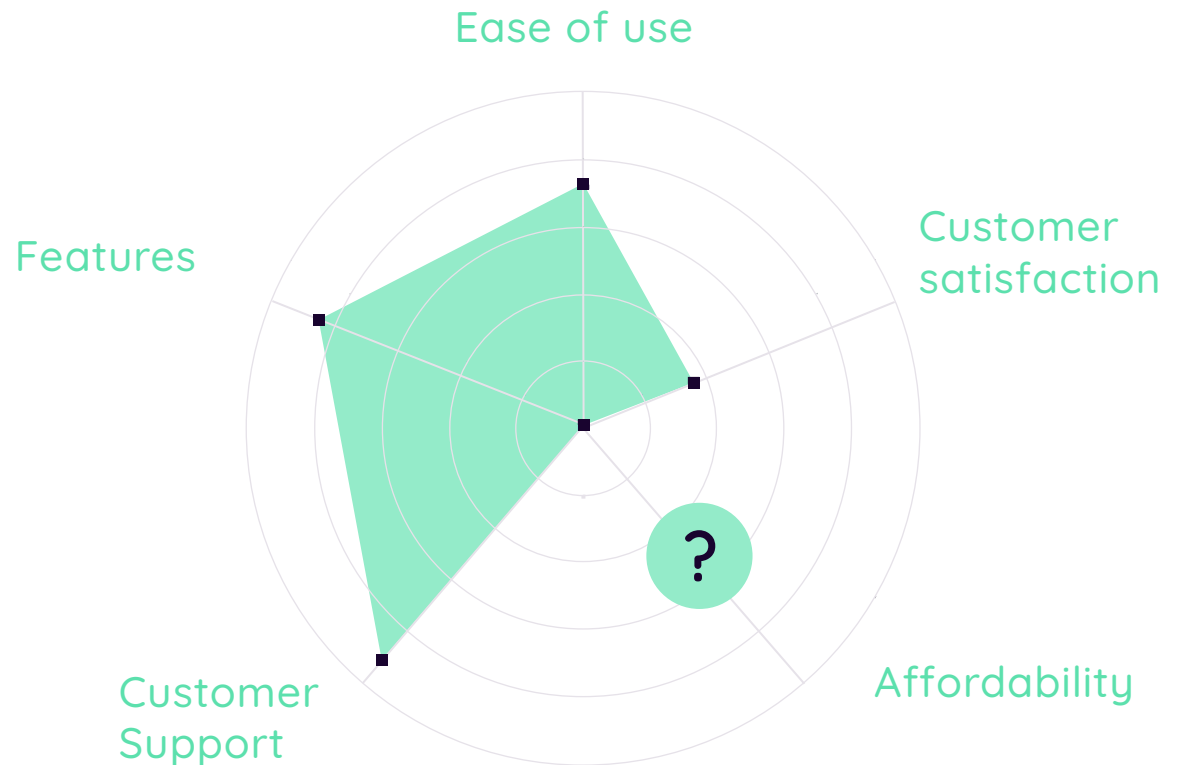
Akeneo is a highly extensible and customizable open source PIM system designed for large enterprises. It comes with an import engine to streamline data, onboarding from virtually any source and utilizes a product grid to put info in order—while helping you execute advanced catalog searches.



Customer Satisfaction scores based on G2 customer data, October 2023



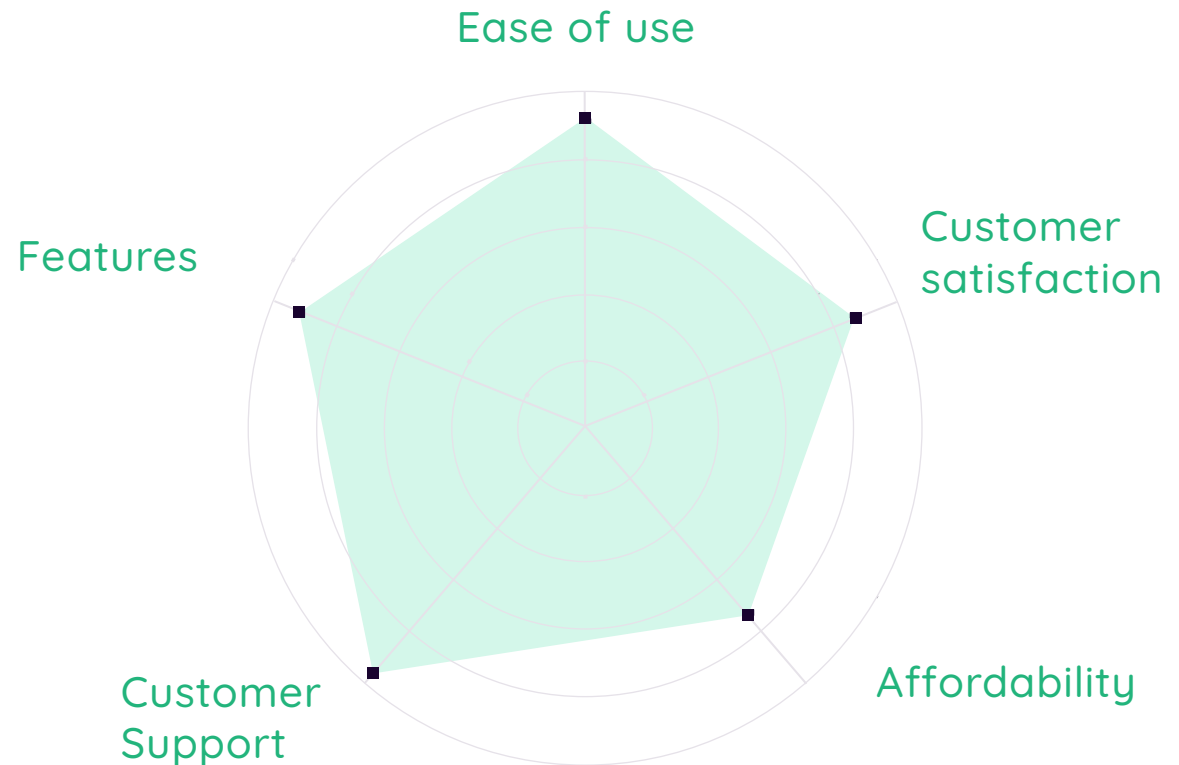
Syndigo is a Content Experience Hub for manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and retailer recipients. A platform to expand reach and elevate experiences—all powered by data.



Customer Satisfaction scores based on G2 customer data, October 2023



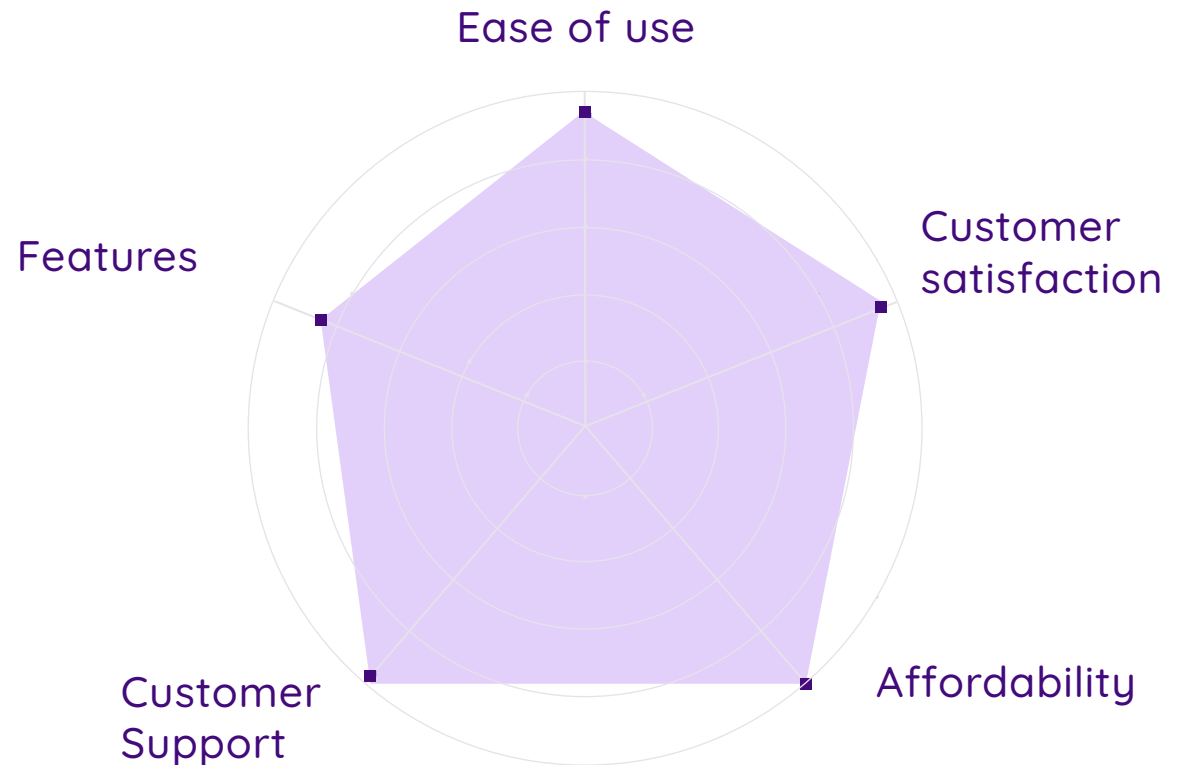
Sales Layer is a cloud-hosted database for product catalogs. You can manage and share content to marketplaces, distributors, and manufacturers, both upstream and downstream.



Customer Satisfaction scores based on G2 customer data, October 2023



Plytix is a cloud based PIM, tailored to ecommerce companies, big or small. Founded by ex-Googleers, their mission is to help online retailers compete in the hypercompetitive market by providing a powerful platform at a low cost. Plytix has product development and customer support at its very core of their operation.



Customer Satisfaction scores based on G2 customer data, October 2023

CASE STUDY

How Browze cut their time-to-market in half using PIM

The team at Browze provide fast, affordable, and high-quality products, from yoga mats and silk pillowcases to kitchen tools and outdoor lighting. They send products directly from factory suppliers to their customers' doorsteps, and up until 2022, they managed their product data entirely within spreadsheets.

Max Tissot, who has been working with Browze for over two years, recalled life before PIM. **"We were spending 2 hours a day manually updating our product data, and the team in China was also updating their ERP manually as well."**

Back then, these practices were wasting a lot of time for Max and his team. They had to create individual products in their Shopify store and manually manage complex spreadsheets and digital assets. **"We would spend weeks just creating products in Shopify, and all of these manual processes meant it would take two weeks before a new product was ready for market."**

Max knew his team needed a PIM. But having only had previous experience with large, custom-built enterprise software, it was a mission to find the right solution for a modest but fast-growing team. The act of looking, Max explained, was **"a kind of purge, as it forced us to consider what really mattered."**

“

We were forced to ask ourselves, what do we really need?" The answer ended up being several key elements: affordable, user-friendly, great workflows, and a direct Shopify integration.

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CASE STUDY

How Browse cut their time-to-market in half using PIM (continued)

For Browse, Plytix really has been a huge time saver. Before getting started with the software, they were spending between 10-12 hours a week just checking and double-checking data. These days it takes Max's colleagues about 15 minutes per day to update their product data, **"even if there are 300 new products."**

Although some aspects of time to market can't be shortened, Max explained, **"like our sample orders to check quality,"** even still, **"Plytix has divided the time to market by at least 2,"** from 14 days to 7. He commented, **"It's worth it. Oh, absolutely. Yeah, because of the time that we are saving. We have the time to do other stuff that is more profitable for us."**



Choosing the right PIM software with confidence

Let us make it easy for you! It may seem like there's an abundance of factors to consider when choosing a PIM for your Shopify store. Who will it affect? Marketing? Sales? The guy that sits in IT? How long is it going to take you to get started vs. actually becoming fully onboarded? What are your competitors doing? Do we really need all those features - which will solve our needs? *You get the gist.*

One thing is certain though: It's crucial to do your research. There's nothing to say you won't find the PIM system of your dreams on day one, but make sure you've done your due diligence, and can make that all-important decision with confidence.

Hi, I'm Matthew!



To give you a helping hand, we'd be happy to **jump on a call** and help talk you through all your PIM options.

Speak to a real human like me, so we can help you find the best PIM tool for your business (even if it's not us!).



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