

# A Guide to Improving Marketing Asset Management

9 Steps to Implementing Best Practices  
for Your Organization

# How to Improve Marketing Asset Management

## Revitalizing Your Approach to Marketing Asset Management

Marketers understand the importance of proper asset management in driving efficiency and effectiveness. They also understand the broader implications it has in preserving brand integrity, increasing agility to respond to changes in the market and creating timelier, more relevant customer interactions. However, many still face challenges in creating and implementing best practices and solutions to optimize performance.

Whether you're looking to improve upon existing practices, just getting started, or considering a new system to replace your current one, this guide will help you identify and define appropriate steps for taking on this kind of initiative.

Marketing asset management and related solutions such as marketing resource management are utilized by many of today's leading brands. They are employing them for a plethora of reasons – such as aligning affiliates with a central marketing vision and speeding marketing cycle time – and enjoying measurable benefits as a result. Even if you're a mid-size company or smaller business, there are a variety of practices and technology solutions available to help you reduce costs and increase revenue.

# Brand Asset Management: One of Today's Biggest Marketing Challenges

As marketers, we're here to empower our organizations to capitalize on all revenue opportunities out there, while leveraging the most value from the marketing budget. How do we do it? By increasing marketing relevance and personalization, increasing brand consistency and improving marketing-cycle time.

Asset management is a critical component to all of this. If you don't have a handle on your brand assets, you're wasting valuable time, money and resources. In fact, an IDC survey found that the time spent searching for information averages 8.8 hours per week at a cost of \$14,209 per worker per year. With numbers like that, the ramifications of asset mismanagement are startlingly clear.

## Organizing Chaos

But, that's easier said than done when your company is moving at lightning speed and you're creating more assets in more channels every year. Not only that, these assets are turning over at increasingly faster rates. Compound that with multiple regional offices across numerous locations, housing many players and a large volume of marketing materials at their disposal, and it becomes more and more difficult to pinpoint relevant material. This can lead to version control issues, inefficiencies and a whole host of problems that hinder marketing success and negatively impact your bottom line.

Chances are, some of the assets related to your brand have lost some sense of organization. Remember all of those projects from last year – all of those new presentations? Where did they go? Who has them? If you've been a marketer for any amount of time, you've probably experienced the familiar scenario of hearing about a sales rep in a pinch raiding the marketing closet before a big meeting, only to show outdated collateral to a high-profile or prospective client.

## Turning Chaos into Conquest – 9 Ways You Can Revamp Your Asset Management Practices

We have provided some steps you can take to make practical, positive changes to the way marketing assets are managed, shared and disseminated at your company. Add some basic checkpoints to your marketing practices around Asset Management and you can help optimize your marketing resources, improve your agility and get you on your way to operating at your maximum potential.

## 1

## Discovery

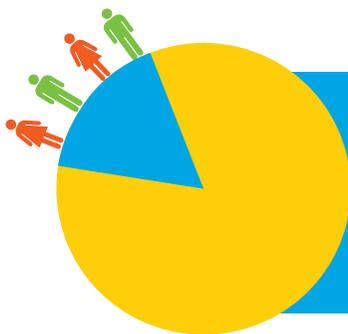
First and foremost, you need to pinpoint where all of your assets are being stored, and how and where they're being referenced. This applies not only to your immediate marketing team (including coordinators, designers, web developers, etc.), but to sales teams, field reps, agencies and similar groups of stakeholders representing your brand to the world.

## 2

## Take Inventory

You must identify and record all assets. Be sure to categorize them as specifically and thoroughly as possible. Especially with the explosion of digital formats and methods of delivery, it is imperative you consider all of your digital assets – not just logos and photos. In addition to other digital assets like videos and audio, be sure to include business assets owned by Marketing, such as letterhead, business cards, email signatures and the like.

Organization is key: Cloud-hosted marketing asset management software, especially when it includes comprehensive search and find features, can help keep everything current and easily accessible to team members. Depending on your business, you may find that spreadsheets are best for recording and facilitating updates. However, if you go this route, consider utilizing a cloud-based tool such as Evernote or Google Drive to allow for real-time sharing, collaboration and edits.



A survey of marketing executives revealed that 49% felt they lacked the staff to manage assets

## 3 Set Standards

Remember, setting guidelines for how your brand is managed is as important as [creating brand standards](#). These guidelines and standards should be a part of your Content and Asset Strategy, which should be in place before you implement this type of initiative.

Provide clear guidelines as to how assets should be named, and consider including identifying factors such as CMYK and date of production. Take into consideration the level of detail and specificity that will make the most sense for your organization. For smaller or mid-size businesses, keeping it relatively simple is the best practice, while global brands may require a higher level of classification to accommodate multiple business units, brands or the like.

Outline instructions as to how assets should be used, then assign ownership. Also related to use – permissions. Make a list of all of your users and user types, and establish conditions accordingly.

Last, but not least, be sure to properly communicate these standards. Especially for stakeholders outside the marketing department, it's important to provide very specific instructions and a dedicated point of contact for questions they may have.



## 4 Collaborate

Review and brainstorm with your immediate team to identify any gaps in asset inventory and make recommendations for stakeholders. Depending on how your department is organized, it often helps to elect a project leader. To be effective, the project leader must be able to delegate ownership across sub-parties. Build a network throughout the organization to champion the initiative.

84% of businesses report that finding assets is the biggest challenge when working with digital assets



84%

## 5 Implement

Asset Management is a critical marketing operations and brand management initiative, so it should be handled with the same level of importance as your priority external initiatives. Make it a campaign – set one or more meetings to kick off and follow through so you can make all parties accountable.

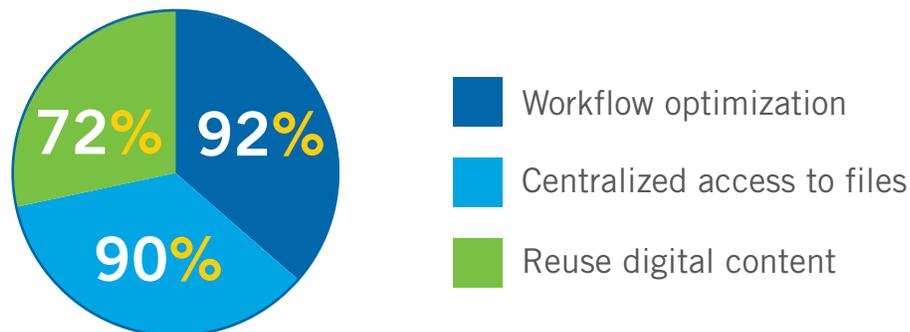
## 6 Avoid TMI

In a world where inboxes are flooded, be strategic about how you distribute information. It's important that the right people get the right information; overloading every team member with constant cc's will likely lead to them 'tuning out' quickly. Segment your messages to the correct audiences, and keep communications concise, highlighting and bolding important points while allowing lengthy information and hefty documentation to be accessible but not burdensome.

## 7 Consider Asset Management Software

If you don't already have a Marketing Asset Management, Digital Asset Management or Marketing Resource Management system in place within your organization, this is a wise investment. These systems provide a centralized platform not only for storage, but curation and dispersal of a wide array of key marketing resources.

Most Compelling Reasons to Implement DAM for Top Performers (Gleanster)



# 7 Continued

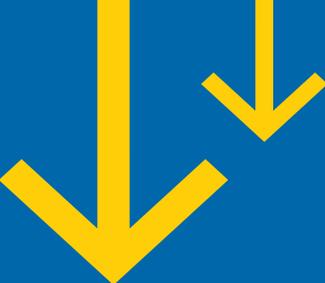
Asset management software takes a variety of forms, and can range from strict digital asset management to the management, modification, sharing, distributing and tracking of anything from collateral to product training materials. Regardless of which system best suits your needs, it provides your organization with the ability to:

- Control what assets stakeholders are presenting to customers and prospects
- Reduce costs and help eliminate wasteful spending
- Enhance efficiency and consistency while improving time to market
- Quickly locate the right files, saving time across all departments
- And more

## Marketing Asset Management Systems

### Benefits

- Faster, easier access to assets
- Speed time to market
- Improve consistency
- Reduce spend
- Better brand-customer interactions



# 8

## Make it Measurable

As you're developing this initiative, think ahead as to how you will know if it's working. Consider what metrics and tools you can put in place to determine the ROI of your initiative, and be sure to include a strategy for measuring "soft" benefits like improved collaboration. Ensure you have a way to prove to your VP and/or CMO how this internal effort is benefiting the organization. Be prepared to provide hard facts to demonstrate measurable benefits. Based on the unique needs of your organization, these metrics can range from user satisfaction and weekly logins to turnaround times and sales figures.

### Case In Point

An award-winning global leader in food services has more than 250,000 employees and clients across 22 countries. The company is responsible for creating catering menus for more than 750 corporate locations across the United States – a huge undertaking. They needed to be able to respond to local and regional preferences quickly and easily, providing brand-compliant and location-specific assets and materials.

Working in tandem with the client, Strata developed a custom, cloud-based marketing management platform to provide the support and flexibility they need. Controlled centrally by the corporate marketing team, the tool's marketing asset management features give site managers easy access to corporate-approved templates, images and messaging. It offers location managers a dynamic, self-serve online tool while allowing corporate marketing to preserve their brand, streamline processes and control costs.

As a result the company now benefits from better implementation of corporate strategies as well as compliance with business rules. But the advantages go beyond quantifiable measurements; this industry leader has also been able to cut production turnaround time by 50% - all with fewer people.

## 9 Follow-Up

Committing to these practices is the first step, but without a system by which to follow up, you lose the opportunity to truly understand, refine and protect its value on an ongoing basis. Beyond quantitative measurement, it's important to find out from all stakeholders how it's working for them. Set up post-implementation interviews with key stakeholders and department heads to evaluate the success of your efforts. Though you will identify your own ways to best evaluate the impact, consider starting with an assessment of how, and how much, the system and its assets are being used. This typically provides a clear indicator as to which features and assets are associated with wins, versus those that are not successful.





# Partner for Success

If you have concerns about your internal resources and your ability to launch an effective Marketing Asset Management Initiative, it makes sense to align your organization with strategic partners who can help you optimize your approach. Whether that approach includes only [digital asset management](#), or extends out to printed collateral and other [marketing resources](#), it's important to find someone who will continually work with you to evolve your initiative and drive its momentum forward.

At Strata, we offer a wide array of asset management solutions with a [proven record of success](#). If you'd like to learn more, visit the [contact us page](#) or call 610-941-6100.

---

## Sources:

*Gleamsight Benchmark Report Marketing Resource Management (MRM), 2014, Gleanster LLC*  
*Marketing Asset Management – It's More Than Just Your Image, 2010, Aberdeen Group, A Harte-Hanks Company*

---



[www.gostrata.com](http://www.gostrata.com)

## About Strata

Strata provides marketing services and technology solutions that help companies solve critical business issues and meet strategic objectives. By leveraging industry intelligence, marketing expertise and digital technologies, we deliver smart solutions that advance clients' success in an increasingly complex and competitive business landscape. Specialties include data-driven marketing, full service production and cloud-based solutions for marketing, communications and data management. For more than 20 years clients have chosen Strata for complete turnkey solutions and individualized services to help them drive effectiveness and measurable growth for their business. Visit [www.gostrata.com](http://www.gostrata.com) to learn more.