



media**valet**TM

HOW TO BUY A DAM

the 8-step playbook



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HOW TO BUY A DAM

the 8-step playbook

While content and digital strategies are reaching the maturity stage for the majority of organizations, there's a growing need for an infrastructure that can enable companies to leverage and distribute content, and maximize its impact.

Most organizations start with local storage or file management solutions, such as Dropbox and Google Docs. While these work well for personal storage and small-scale team collaboration, as content volume and distribution requirements grow, companies start looking at platforms that solve content challenges from the corporate perspective.

Enter digital asset management (DAM) systems. Specialized for content in a wide variety of digital formats, a DAM allows for the secure and easy use, sharing and distribution of important brand assets. And as digital asset management systems continue to integrate with existing marketing processes, DAM is quickly becoming a core part of the MarTech stack.

ONLY 27%
OF MARKETERS HAVE A
PROCESS IN PLACE TO
AGGREGATE, ORGANIZE
AND MANAGE
THEIR VISUAL ASSETS

- HUBSPOT/CMO COUNCIL

COMPANIES REPLACE
\$300 BILLION
WORTH OF DIGITAL ASSET
EVERY YEAR BECAUSE
OBJECTS ARE LOST,
MISPLACED OR DUPLICATED

- GISTICS

The Digital Asset Management Journey

As a digital asset management vendor, we'd love to say that a DAM implementation is a one-click solution to having your assets in perfect order, however, there's a reason we call this a DAM Journey. One of the key values of a digital asset management project is taking the time to audit, organize and understand the types of assets you have across your organization, the ones that carry true value and how they can be leveraged by your company over time. Mapping out the value of your content in relation to your entire organization is an important exercise, and results in tremendous value once it gets operationalized via a digital asset management platform.



AUDIT



ORGANIZE



UNDERSTAND

Every Successful Journey Has A Strategy

Having seen hundreds of DAM projects, large and small, we've learned a thing or two about building out a DAM strategy that's easily adopted, results in significant time savings and drives productivity across the entire content cycle. The impact of a DAM platform is unique to every organization, but all starts with the same set of core DAM basics. In this guide, we share the 8 steps to a successful DAM implementation.

- Step 1:** Define the Project Scope
- Step 2:** Identify Must-Have Features
- Step 3:** Get Stakeholders on Board
- Step 4:** Set Long and Short-Term Deliverables
- Step 5:** Start Vendor Research
- Step 6:** Build a DAM Requirements List
- Step 7:** Start the Approval Process Early
- Step 8:** Partner for Long-Term Success

8 Steps to Buying a DAM

STEP 1

DEFINE THE PROJECT SCOPE

When implementing a DAM, the first step is to understand the scope of the project. What are the immediate needs and the possibilities for the future? Which departments or users will benefit the most from this solution? It's critical to identify the extent of the initial solution implementation, while also keeping a long-term vision for the overall goals of your DAM platform in mind.

Start by considering these three questions:

1. What are your existing challenges around managing digital assets?

Are there any repetitive bottlenecks or breaks in productivity caused by the creation or accessibility of your content and digital assets? Think about if you've heard any of these following pains from your team:



“

Our team keeps using outdated product shots and logos in their work. Not only does this give incorrect information to our customers - it really erodes our brand perception, as most of our communications are inconsistent.

“

We need to increase our team's productivity and drive faster campaign and product launches, but it's difficult when we can never work as a team on creative assets.



“

I wish I could easily access the visuals and content I need for my campaigns, instead of having to ask someone to send me the required asset.



“

I get multiple requests for photos, resources and visuals every day! I wish they could go and find what they need on their own, so I can focus on creating new, great content.



Often, creative operations teams are the driving forces behind a digital asset management project, as they experience the biggest productivity pains around their company's content, however, the overall impact of a DAM also extends to partners, sales teams, agencies and distributors.

2. Who needs to be involved in the project?

The right level of communication within an organization is one of the key drivers in any successful technology implementation. Identifying what stakeholders will be impacted, and involving them early on in the DAM process will help ensure that you have the correct scope of the project and won't get derailed with new requirements at a later stage.

Here are some questions to ask when considering who to involve:

- Will the DAM solution be implemented within a single department or across the entire organization?
- What departments are going to be impacted by the DAM project?
- Will all company locations require the same level and speed of access to the DAM?

- Are there any groups or departments that might be resistant to change (IT concerned about additional support SLAs, sales teams resisting new processes, etc.)?
- Could collaboration with any external groups be simplified with the addition of the DAM (think agencies, partners, consultants, etc.)?

The crucial part here is to involve necessary parties and get their support early, rather than encountering resistance or discovering additional requirements.

3. How will DAM scale with your future needs?

A good DAM implementation will solve your immediate challenges around content and digital assets – a great DAM implementation will also lay the foundation for any future growth and digital transformation. Consider the following:

- How will our content and assets grow over time? Are we planning to invest into new media formats?
- Are we planning potential team and geographical expansions? Will international teams need access and a similar user experience?
- Do I have any teams that will have different training & support requirements? Are there any growth plans in the future that could require additional training?

Understanding how your organization and content will grow over time is key to finding the right vendor, and developing a taxonomy and keyword strategy that won't need to be changed in the future.





DAM Journey:

AN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE WITH GLOBAL OFFICES

The largest airline in Asia had to find a solution to enable their global teams with **easy access to their brand and marketing resources**. One of the key requirements was that user experience, asset search and downloads were **seamless and fast** in China offices, as well as other offices all over the world.

In addition to a demo with multiple stakeholders, this airline conducted comprehensive sandbox testing, specifically evaluating their key requirement – performance across different regions. In this case, having a dedicated data center in APAC provided speed of access that was multiple times faster than other options and was decisive in their vendor selection.



IDENTIFY MUST-HAVE FEATURES

Once you know what your organization's scope is and you've identified DAM stakeholders from various departments, identify which features are must-haves and nice-to-haves for your use-case. Consider the following elements:



SECURITY AND IT:

Determine what platform (Microsoft, Amazon, private cloud, etc.) will meet your organizational needs. Do you have any security or certification requirements? Are there organizational IT policies around asset storage and risk levels?



CORE FUNCTIONALITY:

Identify the core features you need for basic functionality. Think about type of search, flexibility in permission structure, types of metadata, levels of workflow, etc.



FILE TYPES:

Decide which file types the system will need to handle and provide management, previewing, rendering and sharing for. Do you need previews of PDFs, Illustrator files, PPTs, Office files, videos, or architectural drawings?



INTEGRATIONS:

Do you require integrations with existing productivity systems (for example, Hootsuite, Office365, Adobe Creative Cloud, etc.) or do you need access to an Open API?



SUPPORT AND TRAINING:

Evaluate the level of ongoing support you'll need. Are there any additional support SLAs that your organization requires?



ACCESSIBILITY AND SPEED:

If you're rolling out the system to multiple international offices, think about where you'll need data centers. Do you need the same access speed across all locations? Consider testing these data centers for access availability.

Once you've narrowed in on the key features, it will become much easier to navigate the DAM vendor landscape and narrow down a short list of vendors. For additional insight into feature comparison, take a look at this [DAM vendor scorecard](#).



GET STAKEHOLDERS ON BOARD

Whether the DAM project is driven by sales, operations, marketing or IT, there are usually multiple stakeholders from different departments involved. Addressing their needs and interests early on will help ensure that they help move the project forward, rather than stall it.

Typically, stakeholders involved in a DAM initiative include:

<i>Internal</i> STAKEHOLDERS	<i>External</i> STAKEHOLDERS
CMO/VP of Marketing	Contractors
CIO/VP of IT	Agencies
VP of Sales	Media Partners
Marketing Operations	Partner Channel
Creative/Digital Director	Photo Contributors
Head of Sponsorship	Distributors
Video Production Manager	Investors

Working with key stakeholders to identify features that will help them get value from the platform enables you to increase the ROI of the project right from the get go and helps build a stronger business case for DAM.

Here are some of the goals that different department leaders can meet with a DAM implementation:



CMO:

Increasing ROI on content, improving marketing operational efficiency and strengthening brand integrity.



CIO:

Ensuring security of corporate digital assets, meeting industry compliance requirements, and improving critical systems through integrations.



CREATIVE/DIGITAL DIRECTOR:

Improving productivity of creative teams, enabling them to scale production with Adobe and CMS integrations.



VP OF SALES:

Enabling sales teams with easy access to sales and marketing resources, and providing impactful templates for presentations and RFPs.



MARKETING OPERATIONS:

Improving marketing team's efficiency, reducing team collaboration bottlenecks, and building a foundation for content and asset automation.

Here's an expanded overview of what each DAM project stakeholder is looking to achieve and [how DAM can enable their goals.](#)





SET LONG AND SHORT-TERM DELIVERABLES

A digital asset management project will have multiple phases and it's important to outline them and establish project milestones that need to be achieved in order to move the initiative forward.

When thinking short-term, consider small wins, such as:

- Finishing the initial research on DAM vendors
- Getting the budget approved
- Establishing a core user team
- Determining a metadata structure
- Mapping out access and permission requirements

When looking at mid-term goals, focus on key deliverables, such as:

- Shortlisting top 3 vendors
- Getting stakeholders signed off
- Selecting your final vendor
- Getting legal approved
- Hitting the implementation date

When looking at long-term goals, map out milestones, such as:

- Uploading all of your digital assets into the DAM
- Meeting your DAM adoption targets
- Adding your key integrations
- Expanding the DAM beyond core users
- Establishing and monitoring best practices around data quality and asset uploads

Plot each deliverable onto a timeline that's visible to each stakeholder and hold everyone accountable to their respective deliverable. This will be vital in keeping your project moving forward and completing your digital asset management initiative on time and on budget.



DAM Journey:

A POST SECONDARY REBRANDING

A leading Canadian post-secondary institution implemented a DAM as a core component of their upcoming **re-branding initiative**. It involved a full audit and digitization of existing assets, and the changing of their logos, colors and voice to match the updated brand. As part of the roll-out they also want to ensure that the latest approved resources were available to a wide range of internal and external users, such as press contacts and agencies.

The key to completing their DAM project on time and on budget, was establishing a **clear and realistic timeline** for the vendor review, selection and implementation. The project timeline took into consideration the fiscal year, budget availability and IT requirements, and established firm project milestones with specific stakeholders accountable for meeting each timeline. Phase one of the implementation focused on the assets critical to the rebranding initiative, with following phases including assets with less urgency.



START VENDOR RESEARCH

When researching DAM systems for the initial demo, a combination of third party reviews, vendor messaging and industry thought leaders will help you create a full picture of what a specific vendor has to offer.



PEER REVIEW SITES

like Capterra, Serchen and G2 Crowd provide vendor comparisons and real customer reviews and ratings.



VENDOR WEBSITES

provide a glimpse into vendor personality, values, culture, breadth of offerings and available integrations.



INDUSTRY THOUGHT LEADERS,

like DAM News, Gartner and MarketsandMarkets will provide an overview of key industry players.

Use the early stages of communication as indicators of how your partnership with a DAM vendor will unfold.

- How quickly and effectively do they respond to any inquiries you have?
- How did they approach your demo – were they listening to you?
- Did they take the time to do their research about your company?
- Do they have experience with customers in your industry?
- Do you feel that the vendor understands your challenges and is invested in your success?

Your gut intuition about the vendor is a good indication of how your ongoing relationship will be.



BUILD A DAM REQUIREMENTS LIST

On the demo, have a list of requirements ready, and make sure the vendor is able to meet your unique needs. It's important to have a set of standard questions when reviewing vendors, so you can compare “apples to apples”.

Below are some common considerations that will give you a baseline, so you can create a shortlist of vendors.

To access a print version of the worksheet, [click here](#).

QUESTION	MY REQUIREMENTS	VENDOR SOLUTION
<i>Platform</i>		
What platform does the DAM reside on? (Microsoft Azure, AWS, private servers, etc.)		
Can I select a data center in my area?		
What operating systems are supported? (PC, Mac, etc.)		
<i>Core Features</i>		
What types of files do I need to store (videos, photos, 3D files, etc.)? Does the DAM manage and support them?		
What types of search and filter options are available?		
What files can I preview in full-screen?		
What files can I edit within the system?		

QUESTION	MY REQUIREMENTS	VENDOR SOLUTION
<i>Core Features</i>		
What types of metadata can I tag my assets with?		
Am I able to control asset versions?		
How intuitive is the system? Will all necessary users be able to use it easily?		
What asset sharing and transforming options are available (can you change file types and sizes)?		
<i>Accessibility</i>		
How many users do I get with my subscription? What's the cost per user?		
How many permission groups are available? Are they customizable?		
Am I able to restrict specific folders or assets?		
<i>Integrations</i>		
Is there a mobile app available?		
What integrations are available? Can the vendor's integrations meet my needs?		
Do I have access to an Open API?		
<i>Security</i>		
Does the vendor meet the level of asset security and IT standards my organization requires?		
What back-up/disaster recovery systems are in place? Are my assets stored anywhere else geographically?		

QUESTION	MY REQUIREMENTS	VENDOR SOLUTION
<i>Security</i>		
What relevant compliance and certifications does the vendor have?		
<i>Support</i>		
How often can I reach support? Are there any additional costs?		
What's the process for onboarding? How much does it cost?		
How do I get additional training? What's the cost per training session?		
Do I get a dedicated customer success rep?		
<i>Additional Questions</i>		

“

Don't be shy about asking to meet the people beyond the sales team before you buy. There's so much you can learn about your potential [DAM] vendor and the software solution they propose by meeting them and assessing not only their expertise, but the chemistry between your team and theirs.

Anna Cotton, CMS Wire



START THE APPROVAL PROCESS EARLY

Navigating approvals is a vital step in meeting project deadlines, especially when a platform affects the responsibilities of multiple stakeholders. The winning approach usually includes the following three elements:



COMMUNICATING OFTEN

with management and stakeholders about key milestones to ensure a timely and efficient approval process.



AGGREEING ON A BUDGET

early to set clear expectations, establish budget allocation and identify a business case way ahead of the proposal approval time.



DOING A LEGAL REVIEW

of the contract terms once the vendor is selected to allow any final reviews to run concurrently with finalizing the legal and financial details. This can often take 1 to 4 weeks.

“

8 people, on average, are involved in making a decision on purchasing and implementing a DAM platform within an enterprise organization.

Nick Schemmer, Enterprise DAM Account Manager



DAM Journey:

AN INDUSTRIAL CONGLOMERATE WITH MULTIPLE DIVISIONS

A Global Fortune 100 company with 8 different divisions, 8 major lines of business and 40,000 employees across the globe, needed a DAM to manage their plethora of assets. Rather than taking a corporate platform approach, they wanted to focus on each line of business individually. In this **multi-library approach**, each line of business was able to have their own taxonomy, their own metadata approach, their own administrators, and their own particular use-case.

With a DAM, they were able to implement unique solutions for each different line of their business over the span of 6 months. Starting with a department level solution **drastically reduced the scope** of their implementation and enabled them to get quick wins and learn what best practices worked in their environment.



PARTNER FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Your relationship with a chosen DAM vendor shouldn't end after the purchase is completed, in fact, that's where it starts. The adoption of a DAM platform across a majority of users is needed to achieve the maximum ROI on your DAM project, so ensuring everyone is properly trained is critical. If you're not feeling confident after your initial training, always come back to your vendor for additional training and best practices. You want a vendor that's invested in your success and willing to take extra steps to support you at all times.

While every vendor has different levels of support and training, it's easiest to maintain a long-term relationship when the vendor has:



**UNLIMITED TRAINING FOR
ALL USERS**



24/7 SUPPORT



**A DEDICATED
CUSTOMER SUPPORT
REPRESENTATIVE**



REGULAR HEALTH CHECKS



**A ROADMAP TO MAXIMIZE
DAM VALUE**



Take Control Of Your Content

More and more organizations are realizing that content is king - but your content is only valuable if it can be found and used. By taking the time to find and implement a digital asset management system properly, you're setting up your organization with the tools it needs to grow its content quickly, efficiently and successfully.

About MediaVale

MediaVale, a leader in cloud-based digital asset management, helps marketing and creative teams easily manage, collaborate on and distribute marketing assets, visuals and content, improving productivity and increasing ROI on marketing investments. With unlimited users, support and training, teams worldwide can access the content they need, whenever and wherever they need it.

To learn more about how MediaVale and digital asset management can help your team, visit www.mediavale.com.

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