PIM LONGEVITY

How to get the most out of your PIM system for as long as possible

FROM DISPOSABLE PIM TO SUSTAINABLE PIM PROGRAMS

»In a world driven by dynamics, the lifecycle of technology is also shrinking.«

The promise of composable architecture can quickly lead to the temptation to replace core applications such as PIM/PXM more quickly, resulting in ever shorter technology lifecycles. While modern cloud technologies have technically simplified this type of system replacement, many companies underestimate the effort involved in implementation, migration, and integration. The goal of any PIM project should therefore be to pursue a long-term strategy that maximizes the ROI of the chosen solution. To achieve this, the optimal PIM system is one whose tech stack and data modeling capabilities enable a sustainable and flexible solution. In this white paper, we provide you with the best practices that will support the longevity of your PIM system and thus optimise its ROI.

We hope you enjoy reading it!

Yours sincerely,

BJÖRN BAYARD

CEO | BAYARD GmbH

CONTENT

THE 3 LONGEVITY FACTORS FOR PIM

»In principle, the same longevity rules apply to PIM systems as to people.«

An ageing PIM can be recognized by diminishing efficiency gains, functional enhancements that are only possible through workarounds, software updates that become real projects, and use of the system only where absolutely necessary. If the manual effort increases instead of decreasing and the performance of the data processes suffers, this is an unmistakable sign that your PIM solution is approaching the end of its lifecycle and it is time to look for a replacement. However, many companies delay changes to their system, preferring to accept – often unknowingly – massive data value leaks. To prevent such situations, this white paper presents the three **most important PIM longevity best practices** in the individual lifecycle phases of a PIM solution, from **selection of the right system to implementation and system operation**.

In addition to the basic genetic setup of the system technology, these three best practices have a significant influence on the lifecycle of PIM solutions and are quite similar to the human longevity concept:

MAINTENANCE (MOVEMENT)

What regular workouts are for people, continuous adaptation and maintenance of data processes and interfaces are for a PIM system. A PIM system can only deliver the desired added value in the long term if the elementary components of the PIM solution are constantly optimised, the data is reliably cleansed, and necessary enhancements are made.

DATA QUALITY (NUTRITION)

The data that enters the PIM system through onboarding must be harmonised and cleansed during import (if not before) so that it meets the quality requirements of the receiving channels. Many PIM solutions therefore offer validation functions and data quality checks that support users in closely monitoring and continuously optimising the quality level of product information.

DATA CULTURE (SOCIETY)

As social beings, humans need the company of others in order to lead long and happy lives. PIM systems are similar: without user enthusiasm and commitment, usage of the solutions quickly comes to an abrupt end. This makes it more important to involve the actual system users in every phase of the lifecycle and motivate them to participate in the optimisation of functions and processes.

COMPATIBILITY AS A BASIC REQUIREMENT

The best prerequisite for a long-lasting PIM solution is the right choice of system. If a system does not adequately cover actual company requirements, the signs are unfavorable right from the start – for example, if the project is managed unilaterally by IT without involving the business. A thorough **analysis of the requirements** is therefore an important first step before the PIM solution selection process even starts. The **functional requirements can be derived from the established workflows and data processes**. Ideally, everyone who comes into contact with product information should be involved in defining the requirements and contribute their perspective.

Choose a PIM system that suits you.

However, **strategic aspects** also play an important role in the longevity of the PIM solution within an organisation. The provider market for PIM systems is not only large and confusing but above all diverse and extremely heterogeneous in terms of both functionality and technology. In our longevity metaphor, the basic setup of the systems represents the human genes that, alongside lifestyle, have a major influence on longevity.

These points are crucial to finding a system whose "genetics" promote longevity:

Tech Stack

A PIM solution based on **state-of-the-art cloud technology** is the perfect foundation for most PIM initiatives. This tech stack offers the necessary performance to reliably absorb even the highest performance peaks and a great degree of scalability that also covers future additional requirements in terms of performance, functionality, and usage.

Data model
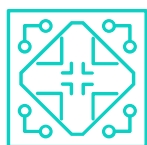
The ability of PIM solutions to model data is becoming increasingly important as companies face the challenge of **reacting swiftly to increasingly dynamic framework conditions**. Whether new regulatory requirements or increasing competitive pressure, it is important to have the right tools at hand to navigate your business safely through fast-moving markets. The data models of the core applications are responsible for this. On the one hand, the data model must be able to cover the rules and standards applicable in the company's industry, while on the other, it must remain flexible and expandable – for example, when new product ranges, trading partners, or new markets with local best practices are added.

Integration capability

The PIM is a central component of a much larger value chain – the so-called **End-to-End Product Content Lifecycle**. As such, it must be able to integrate seamlessly into the relevant peripheral systems and thus enable an end-to-end data process chain. This not only leads to more efficient processes and a faster go-to-market but also allows a high degree of flexibility when changes are made to this value chain. If, for example, the store system is replaced or new output channels such as online marketplaces are added, the integration capability of the PIM system must support flexible adaptation of the system architecture. This also applies to the docking of new suppliers during onboarding or introducing digital shelf analytics to optimise the company's digital value chain.

While this range of strategic and functional factors can make system selection quite complex, it also offers the potential to create the optimal technical conditions for the respective needs.

SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO PLAN

»Success with the right framework.«

Once the right system has been selected, the subsequent phase (implementation) lays the foundations for the system's longevity. The all-important preparation phase is often neglected – this includes the **careful design of the product data processes, interfaces, and use cases** as well as **comprehensive planning of the project**, including the prioritisation of milestones.

The importance of data modeling cannot be emphasised enough. This is where the foundation is laid for future extensions and business agility. If not enough care is taken here, limitations or costly optimisation projects can quickly follow.

Once the model is in place, the data must be migrated from the old system to the new. Depending on the nature of the product data, it may be advisable to cleanse it beforehand in order to keep the quality at the highest possible level right from the start. The migration shows whether the concept of the data model actually works, as this is where the system is basically first breathed into life.

COMMON CAUSE

»PIM should not be an isolated domain but a living basic technology with great significance for the entire organisation.«

PIM is a **central core application** that touches on a wide range of different data processes and business areas. These can include marketing, sales, e-commerce, customer service, and product management, among others. It is therefore all the more important that these business areas are heavily involved in defining requirements and selecting the software, as well as in training, education, and application testing.

The requirements for product data also change over time – especially in data-driven companies where **data value plays an important role for the entire organisation**. Here, product data is seen as part of the shared data truth and linked with other data domains in order to gain important insights for the company's operational goals. An important advantage of such a data-driven company is the **development of a genuine data culture**. In such organisations, the focus is on the **quality and effective use of data** for everyone involved. For the systems, such as the PIM solution, this means that they are automatically used comprehensively and optimised continuously.

ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE ARE THE KEY

»Flexibility and scalability: the secret of long-lasting PIM systems.«

Finding and implementing the right system is important, but continuous adaptation of the solution is at least as valuable. This includes not only the **system configuration** but also its **data model, data processes,** and **interfaces**. Organisations are constantly changing. New employees, M&A activities, new product ranges, markets, and communication channels are added. The surrounding system landscape is also changing. Every new store system brings with it new requirements, and every new print output is an opportunity to optimise data provision. It is therefore vital that the PIM system supports and flexibly absorbs all these changes. This requires a clear **rights and roles concept**, a data model that is easy to expand, scalable performance during performance peaks, and clear interface concepts that enable continuous care, maintenance, and optimisation.

To **ensure PIM system longevity, its basic genetic setup** – tech stack, data model, functional depth – must match the company's goals and requirements, but implementation and integration into the existing system landscape and system operation are just as important. Anyone who neglects their PIM system should not be surprised when the inevitable signs of ageing appear.

SUMMARY

Longevity is no coincidence – it's the result of smart decisions

The longevity of a PIM system doesn't depend solely on the software product itself. While aspects such as the tech stack, flexibility, performance, and integrability of the PIM solution are important, the implementation and ongoing optimization of the system, data quality, and the company's data culture have just as much impact on the system's future viability for the business. The most important insight: PIM is not a one-time project, but a living system that only delivers long-term impact if it can continuously grow alongside the evolving demands of the market, systems, and people.

Next Steps: How to ensure the longevity of your PIM solution

Make an informed system selection

• Align your selection criteria with current and future business requirements.

• Actively involve all relevant departments in the selection process.

Design a future-proof data model

• Plan the data model to be flexible and scalable.

• Define clear ownership structures and maintenance processes.

Ensure sustainable system operation

• Establish regular review cycles for data processes and interfaces.

• Promote internal adoption through training and feedback loops.

Ensure technical and organisational scalability

• Choose an open tech stack with strong integration capabilities.

• Embed PIM as a cross-functional technology within the organization.

Strengthen your data culture

• Promote company-wide awareness of data quality.

• Regularly measure and communicate the value of the system.

This is how you invest in a PIM solution that not only fits your company – but grows with it.

Ready to take the next steps or have questions about implementation?

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