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Global Digital Asset Brand Management

By John Mack

As pharmaceutical marketers turn toward the Internet, the demand for digital “rich media”—streaming video and audio, Flash animation, Java applets, streaming video and interactivity—is growing rapidly. There is a need to leverage this rich media content across brands and marketing campaigns on a global scale, but analysts estimate as much as 30 percent of all content is lost or misplaced annually, resulting in huge cost burdens for companies to recreate lost assets.

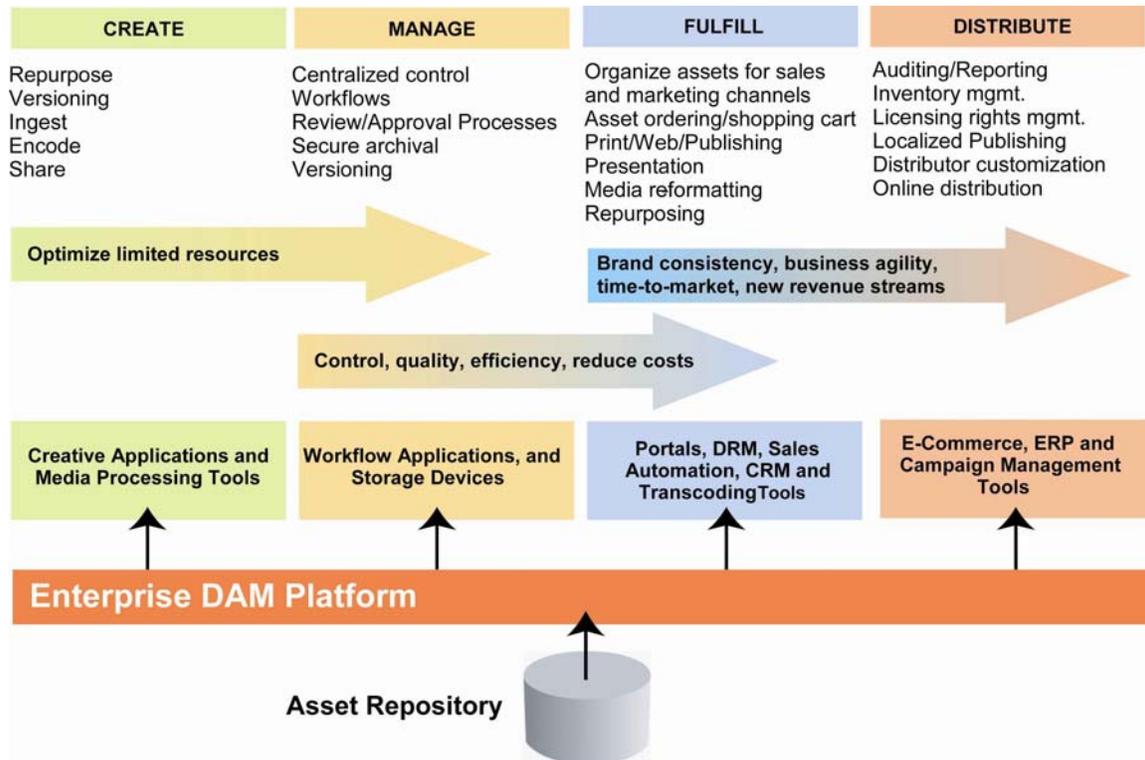
Traditional print and online channels have already created a large challenge for global organizations to manage valuable content. For global pharmaceutical firms, branded rich media content—product documents, graphics, presentations, video—is core to business process, and critical to marketing success. New channels such as cell phones, PDAs, and Podcasting are sure to only add to the complexity—not to mention that

these new media types are increasingly expensive to produce and manage. Digital asset management (DAM) solutions enable enterprises to control these costs, maximize the value of rich media assets, and manage the digital rights to this content.

ActiveMedia

ActiveMedia by ClearStory Systems is an example of a next-generation out-of-the-box digital asset management (DAM) solution for managing rich media. With ActiveMedia, global brand management teams can capture, store, search, find, and repurpose high-value assets, and serve them up on-demand—delivering the right asset in the right format.

“The ActiveMedia system manages the brand content supply chain,” says Susan Worthy, VP of Marketing at ClearStory Systems. “Brand managers work with a number of creative agencies and



An Enterprise DAM platform provides the entire value chain, its workflows, and applications with access to a singular asset repository.

stakeholders inside and outside the company to manage this supply chain. There's a review and approval process that also has to be managed to make sure that from a compliance perspective all the i's are dotted and all the t's are crossed. Multiple brand managers may also be involved. ActiveMedia helps by streamlining the review and approval process and managing the versions, thus assuring that the process is shorter, faster and more efficient."

A big piece of the value is in the delivery side of the supply chain. In a global market, content such as detail pieces and advertising imagery has to be made available to marketing teams in different countries. These local markets may have different budgets, different regulatory issues, and different cultural influences.

"ActiveMedia allows the global brand manager to create and have control over the brand elements and make them available to local teams in a very controlled way," says Worthy. A German team can instantly browse brand materials authorized and appropriate for their market. And they can download approved materials, which they can localize for their market cost-effectively with a few text and cultural image changes.

Distributive Administration

Brand managers can become burdened with the need to manage digital assets all over the world. This can be a big problem for large, siloed organizations like pharmaceutical companies. ActiveMedia makes it very easy for brand managers to safely and securely delegate administrative privileges downstream and allow local teams to manage the privileges and user experience of their subteam members (e.g., regional sales and marketing teams, and agencies).

A number of automated features of the Active Media DAM system improve the workflow associated with the distribution of branded content throughout the world and to their team members. For example, a brand manager can "instantly publish" a completed brand element such as a brochure or PowerPoint presentation to a downstream team by simply dragging and dropping the file into a team collection folder. In this way, brand elements can be made instantly available to detail reps in certain regions.

Metadata and Digital Asset Rights

Metadata is a description of an asset like a photo or a brochure. In the case of a brochure, there might be a description of the brochure itself as well as of photos used in the brochure. Through the

management of metadata, the system can track how long an asset can be used, what medium it could be used in, etc. A photo of an actor, for example, with rights only for use in print cannot be used for use on the Web without additional permissions. A DAM system can prevent such an inappropriate use of assets to prevent fines and other additional costs.

Role of Ad Agencies

Traditionally, ad agencies control a company's digital assets. With a digital asset management system, agencies are still involved—of course—in creating the assets, but pharmaceutical companies reclaim control of their assets, saving time and money.

"If the agency has to courier a CD every time a brand manager needs something," says Worthy, "that can quickly add up to a big cost. Every time you call the agency, the meter starts ticking. Alternative solutions like FTP sites are challenging to manage, and version control and security are always challenging"

Companies that leverage a digital asset management system like ActiveMedia can realize collaboration and workflow benefits that shorten creative cycles and offer big time-to-market benefits.

ROI Achievable in the Pharma Industry

"Our customers are realizing a 70% savings just from being better able to handle content localization," claims Worthy. "That's because the majority of the work has been done by the global (e.g., US-based) team and the local (e.g., German) team can localize that content for a very small additional investment and go to market much, much faster than if they had to create the content from scratch. And more important, pharma companies have better brand control."

The fact is, any pharma company that builds and launches new brands every day, or manages many different products under one global brand, can achieve the same level of ROI or more by being able to get products to market faster and more efficiently. First-to-market companies can generally enjoy a premium price for their products or services.

Furthermore, there is no simple rule for measuring ROI. Each pharma organization has its own priorities and opportunities for improvement; therefore, ROI data can be found throughout the entire product or service lifecycle and may include all activities from R&D and manufacturing through packaging, marketing, and sales. To fully understand how and from which areas the sharing

of assets can have a positive effect on ROI, a comprehensive review of each category is needed.

Though hard cost-reduction figures alone can be enough to justify the purchase of a DAM solution, its implementation can also enable more strategic business benefits. For example, one media company that specializes in fulfilling the pharma industry's media needs, justified a DAM purchase in order to make the management and distribution of video assets for media placement more efficient. Another major pharma giant implemented DAM as a global brand portal for sharing marketing materials and collaborating across time zones. This helped them achieve faster time-to-market and overcome some of the cost challenges associated with product launches in new countries.

Conclusion

Today, it's about optimizing the value of the investment in brand communications, which is much more complex today than in the past. Tools like ActiveMedia help brand managers efficiently leverage digital assets that are so critical to global brand communications. As rich media technology and usage evolve, there will be unexpected opportunities to derive additional value from rich media assets – and, by extension, from the DAM solution itself.

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Expert Consulted

The following expert was consulted in the preparation of this article.

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