Connected Product Data and Automated Processes Improve Efficiency and Increase Sales

Company:

SRAM

Industry:

Manufacturing

Region:

Europe

Solution:

Product MDM

Exective Summary

Started 25 years ago by a group of cycling enthusiasts, SRAM supplies high-end cycling components to cycle manufacturers, by now offering most of the components needed to complete any bike. SRAM has expanded by acquiring leading brands such as Avid, RockShox and Truvativ. SRAM accounts for more than 15% of the annual $3.5 billion market in bike components.

SRAM has increased the efficiency dramatically and minimized the amount of information errors by connecting their engineering platform with their marketing platform. The marketing team now has all the information needed well ahead of the promotional campaigns. Furthermore, SRAM can serve wholesalers with trusted and easy-to-consume product information.

Challenge

SRAM isn't just a company supplying the needs of cyclists, it's a company built by enthusiasts. "Since we are all passionate cyclists," says Patrick Brandwagt, SRAM Europe's Managing Director, "we're also our own customers. Anything we develop is a balance between what we hear from the market and what we want for ourselves."

A prime example of this was SRAM's B2B website which, despite being the first port of call for its bike industry customers, was falling behind expectations. While sales are still through contact with SRAM staff, the website supplies the product information that manufacturers need to spec their bikes.

But there were problems, starting with the website not being updated efficiently, accurately or anywhere near often enough. There was no link between the website and SRAM's product lifecycle management (PLM) system, therefore resulting in redundant data entry. So, SRAM went looking for a master data management (MDM) solution.

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Solution

In an ever-changing world, what might have worked in the past can quickly become an outdated solution. Take the data on SRAM's product website, for example. "We updated it once a year," admits Brandwagt, "with product managers and sales staff inputting the data manually. We'd start in October and sometimes still be going in December. It was an inefficient and error-prone process; and after each update, nobody was there to service it anymore."

SRAM's search for a better solution quickly identified Stibo Systems MDM and the ecommerce system Hybris as possible solutions. "One of our customers, Trek, already used Stibo Systems MDM, so we spent time with them and saw how it works and how they have tailored it to their needs. This gave us the confidence that this was the right choice for us."

The system was implemented first across departments and then international divisions. "It went well," says Brandwagt. "Two experienced consultants from Stibo Systems have supported us. They already knew about our industry and ensured that functionality fitted our needs."

Result

Since everything is now automated, product details are created in the system the moment SRAM engineers start to develop it. This gives the marketing team a tremendous head start as they can plan the promotion of a product at the very beginning of its lifecycle and update the information on it at any point. Having seen what is possible with a correctly implemented data solution, Brandwagt now realises that the potential for improvement is limited only by SRAM's vision. "The website works and it is much better than it was, but we are still not satisfied," he admits. "We are now going to improve the search engine and also the user experience by improving the look of it."

While the MDM solution was designed to give bicycle manufacturers all the information they need to make the best component choices, Brandwagt expects wholesalers to respond enthusiastically to the changes. "In the past, they had to cut-and-paste individual product information but now they can download it in one go."

And with such a global market for bicycle manufacturing and sales, the website is now ready to be translated. "Manufacturing in Shanghai is huge and growing so we must be there. In China, they speak little English, so we must translate for them."

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— Patrick Brandwagt, Managing Director, SRAM Europe

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