

WHITE PAPER

# Implementing Your MDM Solution: What to Do in the First 100 Days

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## First things first

After rigorous due diligence, you've identified **master data management (MDM)** as a critical catalyst for solving data challenges and creating new opportunities for your business. You carefully deliberated and developed the right strategy before selecting an MDM: you started with performing a needs assessment, gathered use cases, designed the overarching business case, built the budget and secured the solution.

However, when implementing an enterprise MDM solution, or any other enterprise system for that matter, you need to carefully consider your first steps and biggest priorities to deliver quick time to value and long-term success. But how do you begin? Where do you start? Who should you involve from the outset?

The importance of planning the first steps in an MDM implementation cannot be overstated. **According to one study**, 75% of business and IT executives anticipate their software projects will fail. By prioritizing key activities in the first 100 days, you improve your chances of success.

During the first 100 days, it is essential to define a plan, along with the critical activities, that will enable you to:

- Achieve the greatest time to value
- Control and minimize implementation costs
- Build key capabilities aligned to your business strategy
- Build organizational consensus through communication

By beginning with the right priorities, you'll achieve long-term value and faster return on investment. You'll establish an MDM foundation that will scale to meet your business needs, market changes and customer demands. In addition, after the first 100 days, you'll be well positioned to start providing the organization with several benefits, including:

- A 360° view of master data (product, customer, etc.)
- Operational efficiency through streamlined processes
- Improved collaboration between internal and external groups
- Reduced risk and increased compliance

## 1) Validate and align on initial project scope

While it is important to start with a long-term view of what your organization is trying to achieve, you must ensure that everyone understands what is driving the conceptual design.

It is imperative to start by reviewing and refining your project scope based on business objectives and organizational considerations. This will ensure that your project plans have a clear path to deliver on the intended value.

Defining, refining and adhering to your scope helps to minimize distractions and maintain focus. Your MDM scope should include business, technical and organizational goals, along with any identified barriers.

During your first 100 days, you will likely encounter potential new requirements. Make sure that these are validated against the original scope and business objectives. In addition, determine if they are critical to achieving the initial desired outcomes. If not, capture them for future review, and keep your focus on your essential requirements.

## 2) Identify your project team and stakeholders

It is critical to start your implementation by identifying your key stakeholders – project team members, process owners, subject matter experts and other stakeholders participating in the project. They will need to be onboarded so they understand the overall objectives, what is possible and what is expected of them.

A key role to identify will be your project manager. They will work with your implementation partner and your stakeholders across your organization to coordinate activities. They will also ensure alignment with other projects, activities and resources across your organization.

In addition, take time to perform a stakeholder analysis that explicitly identifies those who will be impacted by your new MDM capabilities. This will include stakeholder groups that help create, manage or consume your master data. These groups may live inside or outside your organization. You will want to assess when and how they will be impacted by your new capabilities. Also, consider how to ensure their awareness of what's coming so they have a chance to participate if appropriate.

Once you've identified your core team and key stakeholders, it is important to educate them on what's possible before heading into your detailed MDM design. Plan to train your team on your new MDM capabilities as part of your initial scope and design.

### **3) Identify target and source data requirements**

Start by identifying your high-level data requirements such as what needs to be published, syndicated and shared inside or outside your organization. Then identify where that data is being sourced or created today and whether it's originating from existing systems or external sources. Also, determine if you need to move some of the data creation to your new MDM solution.

By understanding the data that needs to be managed or published and the sources of the data, you can begin to define your core data model components. This includes the primary and alternate taxonomy hierarchy structures required to support your core business and solutions, as well as the critical relationships and category-specific attribution required for publication targets.

Once your core data model is in place, sample data from your existing sources can be loaded into your MDM solution. This will help you validate the data model, as well as identify data quality requirements and issues. Loading this sample data will also be critical in testing your new workflow process capabilities.

Integration with new and existing systems will be essential to your long-term success. Define your overall integration strategy and begin the design and build of these interfaces early. Make sure that you think about how you will test your data, along with your new MDM processes.

### **4) Define and build processes that leverage MDM**

For your first 100 days, you'll want to define and build initial processes that leverage MDM to streamline, optimize and control how you onboard, enrich and publish your master data. This involves thinking about the future-state process, including the roles and activity sequencing, to ensure that each group has the data they need. You need to determine what information each role needs to see, edit, review or approve at every step of the process.

Spend time on defining process steps and the supporting data. Stand up your workflow activities quickly so that your user community can interact with the processes and the data iteratively throughout the design and build activities.

Also, consider the processes that support overall data governance, especially where data quality issues or exceptions are identified. While MDM will do the heavy lifting, you'll want to examine how you manage data outliers. For instance, you will establish criteria for identifying duplicate customer records, but data that meets a certain threshold may require an examination by a data steward to determine if they are duplicate or different records. The takeaway – don't just assume these functions work without proper evaluation.

### **5) Establish a plan to engage key stakeholders**

You'll want to develop a communication program that continuously addresses the notion of "What's in it for me?" for all of your MDM stakeholders. The best method to do that involves identifying how their group will be impacted and what metrics matter most to them. Because your stakeholder groups will care about different aspects of the project, don't use a single metric list to report to your stakeholders.

For instance, high-level metrics around business outcomes, such as increased revenue, cost savings, operational efficiency, speed to market and new business models (e.g., new ecommerce or digital channels) will matter most to executives.

For mid-level leadership, you'll want to provide process and performance metrics — such as faster product and partner data onboarding and improvements in data governance, quality and traceability — that tie directly to their business functions.

You'll also want to provide granular details for your data stewards using metrics such as records deduplicated, cleansed and syndicated, as well as the number of index records, hierarchies and workflows set up to support ongoing requirements.

It's important to regularly communicate with your project team, data consumers, executives and external parties, which can include your partners, vendors, manufacturers and distributors. Use different mediums such as email, online and in-person meetings to regularly share project

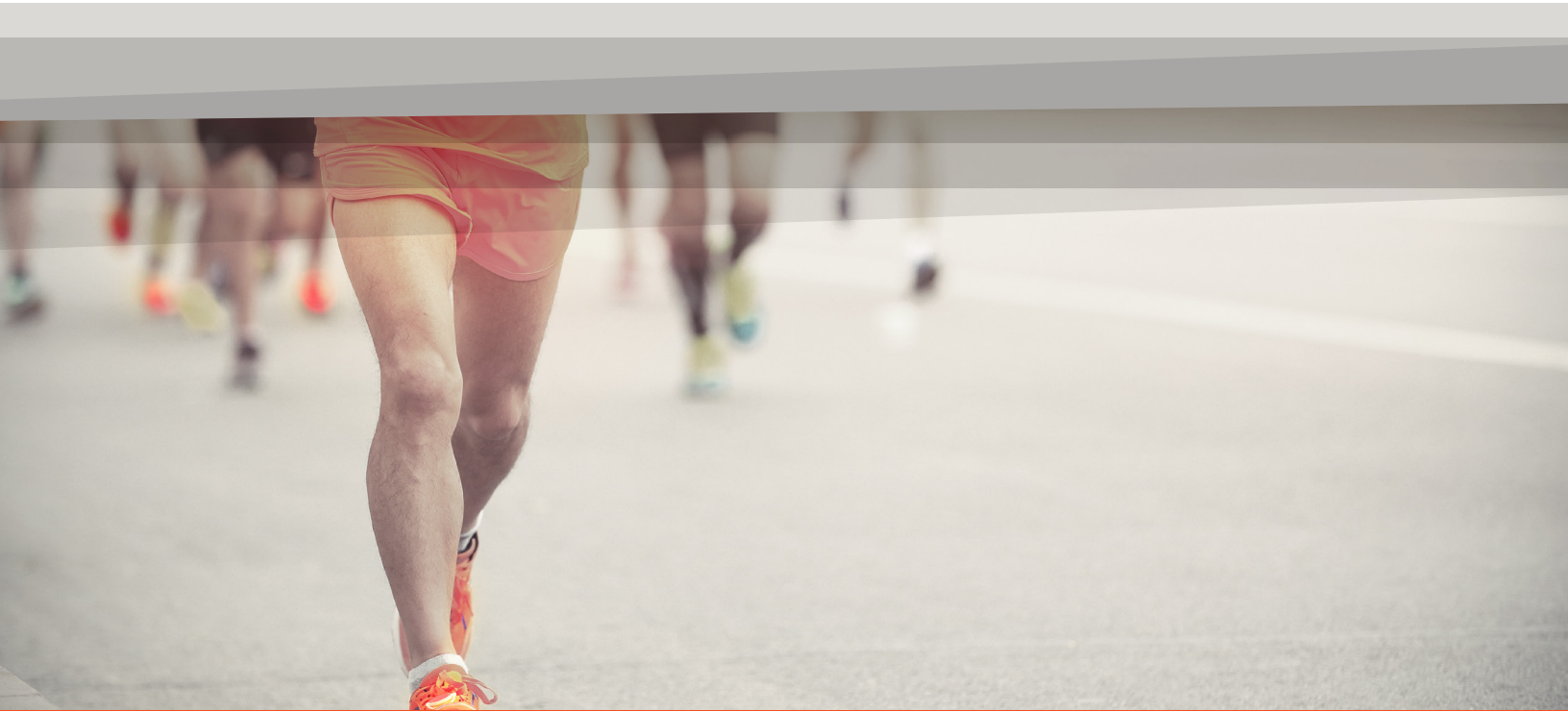
progress or demonstrate iterative design and build capabilities to your broader stakeholder groups. This reduces rework and establishes the foundation for adoption of your new MDM solution.

### **Prioritize and succeed**

Implementing an effective MDM solution makes data a catalyst for true transformation in the digital era. It impacts every aspect of your business and provides insight and flexibility to meet customer expectations and to keep the competition at bay.

What you focus on during the first 100 days of your implementation can be the difference between a fast time to value and a more costly, inefficient or even failed implementation. Prioritizing these critical steps — focusing on the scope, team, data, processes and communication — ensures that your MDM implementation sets you up to deliver successful business outcomes, while providing you with a data foundation that can be scaled as your needs grow.

To learn more about how to succeed with your MDM,  
please email [info@stibosystems.com](mailto:info@stibosystems.com)  
or visit [stibosystems.com](https://stibosystems.com).



### **About Stibo Systems**

Stibo Systems, the master data management company, is the trusted source of MDM solutions based on a unique business-first, people-centric approach. Our solutions are the driving force behind forward-thinking companies around the world that have unlocked the strategic value of their master data; empowering them to improve the customer experience, drive innovation and growth, and create an essential foundation for digital transformation. Stibo Systems is a privately held subsidiary of the Stibo A/S group, founded in 1794, and is headquartered in Aarhus, Denmark. For more information, visit [stibosystems.com](https://stibosystems.com).