
Brandworkz

# Digital asset management for marketing

## A seven-step implementation guide

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# Digital Asset Management for marketing: A seven-step implementation guide

## Introduction

Your digital assets have never been more essential to your business. Customers expect to interact with your brand through multiple channels and in multiple file formats. Everything from video to images is required to portray your brand and its products in the right light to customers on and offline.

A DAM System will enable marketing teams around the world to create world class, on-brand marketing campaigns by storing, managing and providing access to your digital assets in one place. Your brand and product images sit beside your promotion videos and sales presentations, all within one click of your brand guidelines. This will allow you to deliver your key messages across multiple platforms, while staying on-brand and reducing costs.

If you are implementing a new digital asset management system, the most important first step you can take is to build a plan that is thoroughly thought-through. That way you can be as sure as possible that your project will be a success.

The biggest factors for potential failure are *not* the software you select, but are:

- lack of specifics on what it is that will make the project a success (the business case)
- a lack of defined processes for the most common use cases (i.e. the most common tasks that users will need to do successfully over and over again) coupled with the man-power needed both up-front and ongoing to maintain these.
- lack of good, relevant content.

Our seven-step implementation guide is designed to drive the process of specifying and implementing a digital asset management solution and includes tips on what to look for in the product itself.

## Step One: Identify reasons for purchase

The first step in formulating a plan is always to identify why your organization needs a digital asset management system, and how badly.

You probably wouldn't have made it this far in this whitepaper unless you already have a very good reason, but if it's something like "our image, video, graphics and artwork files are all over the place, nobody can ever find what they are looking for, and I'm about to pull my last bit of hair out", then it will unfortunately not fly with the CFO when you ask him or her for some budget.

Ultimately, unless you can show that by implementing a digital asset management system your organization can make/save more money than they will be spending on it (i.e. have a positive Return On Investment – ROI), then it will probably never get any budget.

## Step two: Work out potential ROI

You need to formalise your ROI business case, and the elements are typically in these four areas:

- *Cost Savings*
  E.g. "our design department have 20 ad-hoc image requests per month and it takes us and the requester combined approximately 2 hours to service each request. With a new system we estimate this can be cut to 20 minutes resulting in a saving of £$€ XX"
  or e.g. "the guys in the US are spending $50k per year on buying new images and so are we in the UK, but around XX% of these are interchangeable because we don't share them globally."

- *Increase Revenue*
  E.g. "if we stop the local distributors creating their own off-brand, dubious marketing material, we guesstimate that we can increase our win-rate by 15% resulting in XX revenue increase."

- *Accelerate speed to market*
  E.g. "It currently takes us 12 weeks to get the global marketing material ready for a product launch. If we formalised our workflows around this process we can cut this to around 6 weeks, and we can therefore start earning additional revenue 6 weeks earlier, resulting in on average XX additional revenue for each new product.

- *Cost avoidance*
  E.g. "Last year we got fined $30k by Getty and the model agency we use because our resellers were using out-of-licence images in their marketing material. We can cut this down to around $0 - $10k"

## Step three:  Write the business case

Writing a business case is crucial because it will not just help you get a budget, but it will help you to:

- Understand what functionality you really need, and what you can do without.
- Identify who your main user groups are. E.g. if it's mainly graphics professionals then it doesn't matter if the user interface is a bit complex because you can train them. If its non-graphics professionals like sales, partners, resellers and in-store staff then you absolutely must ensure that the system is intuitive and easy to use.
- Clarify specific use-cases you really need to grill your short-list of vendors on so you don't find out later that the system is weak in a place that's crucial to your project's success.
- Visualise what processes you need for the successful, ongoing management of the system, either manual ones or automated in the digital asset management workflow system.

You will of course also need to review your current position. For example, you may have an existing digital asset management system which isn't working for you, or a file-server somewhere which stores your assets.

Be brutal about how you evaluate what you've got now and don't get bogged down in a jungle of old files or unwieldy filing structures because you'll lose sight of your objective. In building the business case you may even come to the conclusion that it will be better for the company to simply scrap 80% of all the assets you have because they are off-brand, old, out of date, low resolution or have unknown licence terms.

If you have 500 really great images, and 10,000 average or poor ones, then that time is better spent culling your existing library instead of migrating them to a new system.

Once this is done you of course need the vendor to have tools in place to bulk-import and tag these.

## Step Four: Appoint your internal champion

Once you've culled your assets, ask yourself who will be responsible for maintaining them and the system. A digital asset management system will live or die depending on how well you manage it. We often advocate appointing a digital asset management champion in the client company who is responsible for promoting the system internally, encouraging take up and usage by your internal users and external agencies, franchisees or other third parties, and evaluating usage of assets.

## Step five: Articulate the system requirements

Creating a robust digital asset management system requirements document enables you to begin evaluation of vendors and systems. At this evaluation stage it's important to think in terms not only of the features and functionality you require right now, but also how future needs are likely to evolve. You need a system that both meets today's requirements and has the adaptability to grow.

Work with the people who will be your internal and external users and keep them part of the process. We once had a demo with a client who invited 70 team leaders from around the world to sit in on the webinar! While we wouldn't advocate this approach (decision by committee rarely achieves the best outcome), most clients will involve the most important stakeholders in the discussions about design and development of the new system. After all, it is they who have the invaluable day-to-day knowledge of what's needed – and well-informed questions will always make a positive contribution in the decision-making process.

### What to look for in a DAM system – the basics

#### a. One central system, multiple permission levels

One of the main issues marketers have is that different internal teams manage different projects such as a website, a social media campaign or production of sales materials, and the assets associated with these get stored with their individual department users and not in one collective repository for everyone to share.

So the sales team will have a set of digital assets they use, the social media team will have their own and likewise for the brand team.

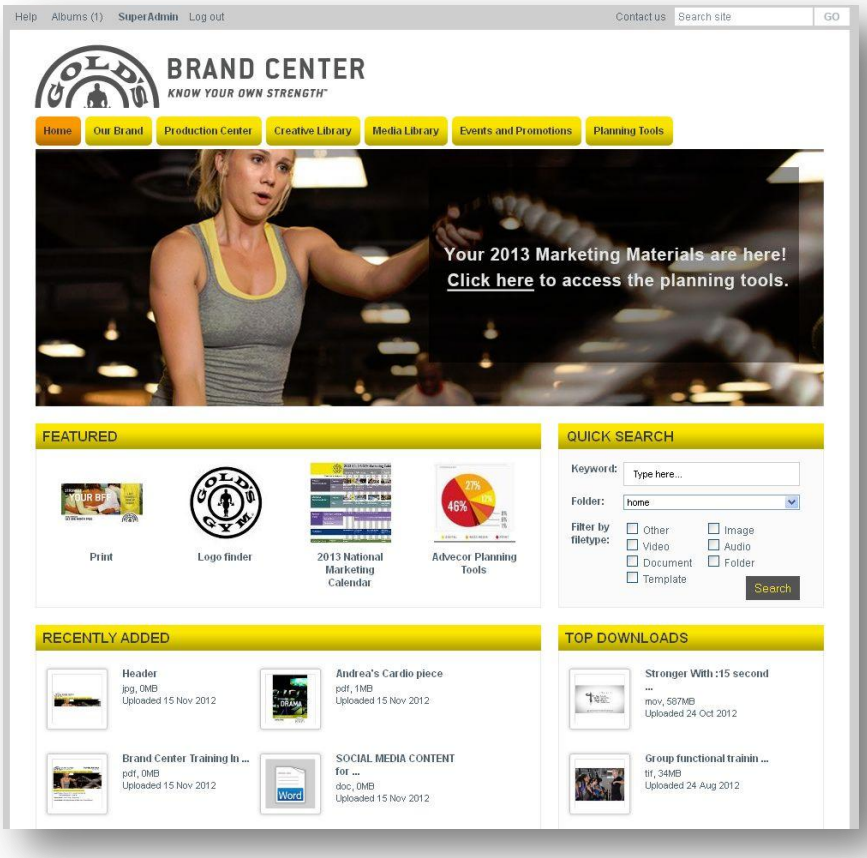
Your DAM system should be the central repository for all digital assets and be built on a permission based system meaning that you can specify which assets users and group can access, what asset version download options they have and who can upload where and when. These permission sets can be easily updated to change as your company changes or as you bring in more external partners.

If you can enable Single Sign-On you can integrate your DAM system with your internal systems such as a company intranet. That means internal users do not have to re-enter their password but simply click on a link on the intranet for automatic login.

Make sure your vendor has servers in secure locations which are backed up regularly, meaning even if an asset is deleted, it can be retrieved and restored to the system.

## b. A simple User Interface

An intuitive digital asset management system requires a simple interface which hides the complex functionality that lies below. That means your users can find what they want and execute actions such as a download with little or no training. Making your site look nice helps with uptake and usage. If users struggle to use your system, can't find what they need or don't enjoy the experience then they won't use it.



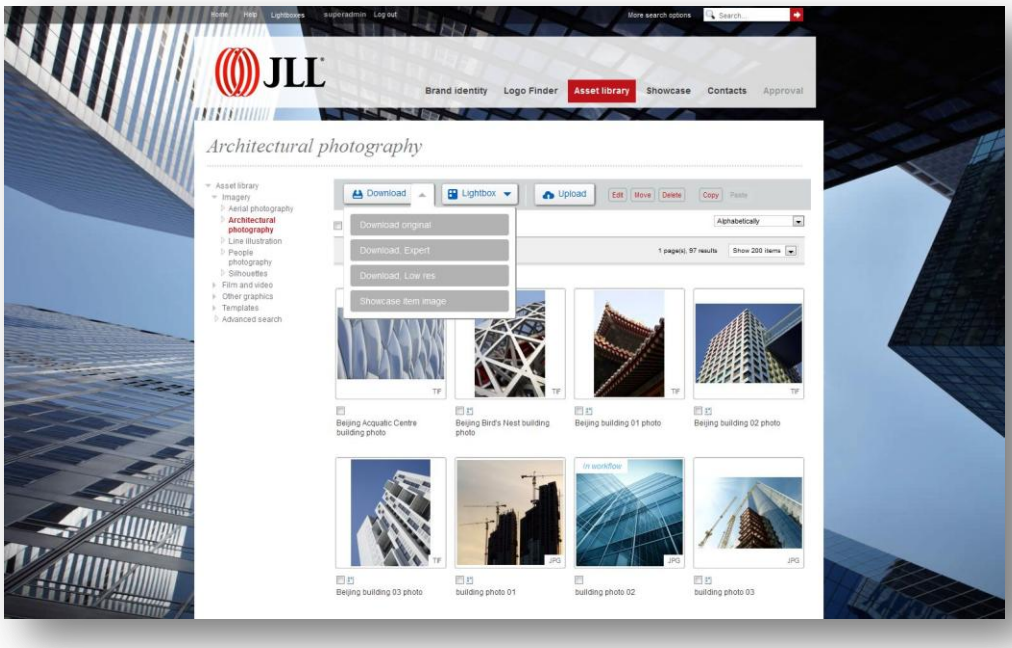
## c. Automatic image and video transcoding

Can you provide your digital assets in dozens of different file formats for every available medium? With an image and video transcoding feature you only need to store one high resolution master artwork for each asset.

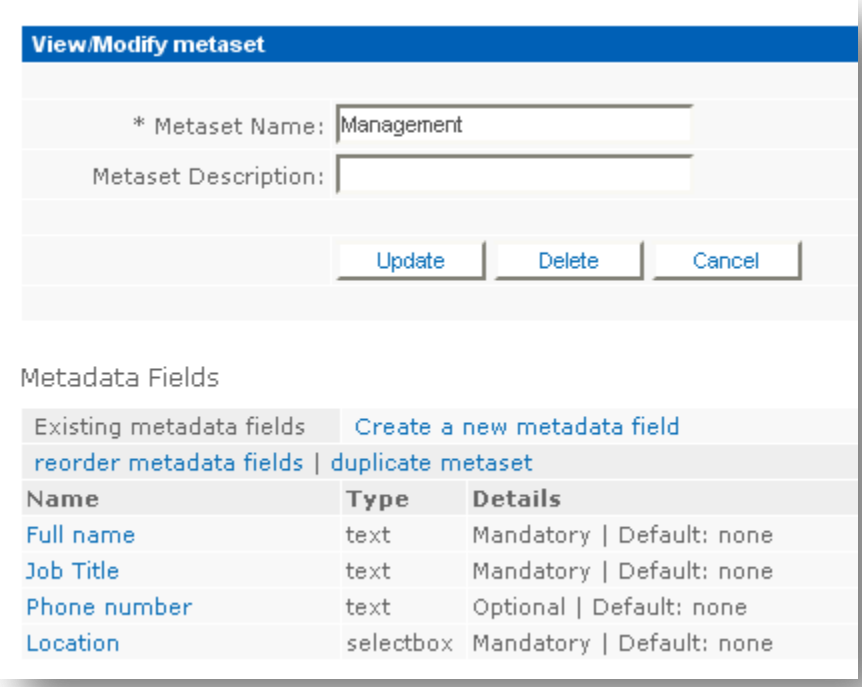
You upload this high-res original into your DAM system, and with one click you can download exactly the right file format and size you need, whatever your use such as a banner ad, a PowerPoint presentation or a high quality print piece.

In addition, systems used by designers may need assets to be downloaded in the right size for use in mobile responsive websites. Graphics for the Iphone 5, 4 and 3, Ipads and Android mobiles are all required in different formats. Some systems will be able to output multiple versions of the same high resolution asset so that web designers working on responsive websites get what they need in seconds.

Storing only single assets makes them significantly simpler to manage, increases brand consistency and reduces costs.



### d. Powerful metadata and search




Make sure you choose a system with powerful metadata search so you are no-longer required to spend time searching through your system to locate the asset you want. Hierarchical metatdata greatly reduces the amount of time required to find your assets as the system intelligently matches your tag in a parent-child way. For example if you tag a cityscape image as New York, it will also automatically be tagged as New York State, East Coast, USA meaning it will turn up in searches for the parent term.

### e. Easy sharing of assets

Most DAM vendors offer an Albums or Lightbox feature to make asset sharing easy. The user selects any asset or group of assets in the system and groups them together for download or to be sent out to another person. Similar to an e-commerce shopping cart, this allows you to gather all the assets you require for a specific task and share them with those you require without having to alter the site folder structure.


## Step six: Implement

Once you have selected your digital asset management vendor, the implementation phase kicks in.

At this stage you need to make decisions on the detail of how the system will operate for you. Make sure you choose a vendor who will offer consultancy at this stage as you need to make sure you:

a) document all file formats that will be going into your media library or libraries.
b) set up your user groups and permission levels
c) determine which file formats need to be blocked from access by any of the user groups you've identified. Do any of the file formats just need a diminished level of access for particular user groups? For example, perhaps they can see certain files but only as a watermarked version, or even just a lower DPI?
d) create auto-previews for images and photos as well as video formats.

e) consider any image or photo formats that should require particular sizes or formats to be generated. An example would be creating 1000px wide PNG rather than 1000px wide JPG. If we are discussing video previews - it is not uncommon for the core assets to be loaded while only M4V or MP4 or Webm versions are made available to certain user types. (It's good to make a note of any of these correlations.)
f) determine which asset segments will require additional data attributes to be tied to them as well as establishing a tagging or keywording standard. Keep in mind the principle that an asset is not an asset if it cannot be utilized.

An early event in the implementation phase will certainly be the migration from your existing system or systems to the new solution. If earlier planning has been well considered, you will know the type of structure you want and what assets will need to be uploaded.

Of course implementation will also require training, management, governance of the system and integration with existing company workflows and processes. One other thing: good project ownership is essential at this stage – without it the process could be derailed, resulting in significant cost, time and ultimately uptake issues.

## Step seven: Manage

With your new system up and running, you will begin to see differences in business processes and how your digital assets are used.

Some processes may need slight modification as part of the bedding in. This is where reporting functionality is so important, providing valuable and detailed insights that will allow you to optimise the system.

The report focus should be on statistics relating to user numbers, uptake percentage, login frequency and the number of assets uploaded or downloaded. These can then be benchmarked against pre-implementation targets and historic data where available.

Expansion of the system is also likely as time goes on. There may have been features that didn't make the first stage of development, or you may want to add new functionality based on user feedback. That is why it is so crucial that, at the evaluation stage, the choice of system should have allowed for expansion and integration with other systems.

## Conclusion

This guide intended only as a sample plan; yours may look quite different, but the underlying processes are common to all projects of this kind. Certainly, good initial strategic thinking is the key to building the best possible system that meets all your needs now and in the future. And just as certainly, the system will need rigorously efficient management once in place.

## About Brandworkz

Brandworkz is a platform used by marketers and brand managers for sharing, collaboration and the streamlining of marketing processes. As a self service brand portal, Brandworkz enables users to search for digital assets and educates them on brand guidelines. Brandworkz also automates the creation and delivery of marketing materials while ensuring compliance to a company's brand guidelines and positioning, maximising the productivity of marketers and agencies.

Clients such as Red Bull Racing, Cambridge University and Jones Lang LaSalle in the UK and Gold's Gym, Pfizer and Aetna in the USA use Brandworkz to deliver stronger marketing and brands.

## Contact:

If you have any questions we would be delighted to talk to you. For further information or to request a demo of Brandworkz, please get in touch.

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