

Creating and sharing product information and insight  
across channels and throughout your enterprise



IBM **Information Management** software

## IBM Product and Services Optimization for Retail: The right product information and insight at the right time



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### Highlights

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- ***Achieve a unified view of product information from any business-user access point (e.g., marketing, merchandising, call center) while leveraging existing IT investments***
- ***Deliver consistent and accurate product content to upstream and downstream systems***
- ***Enable business users to interact collaboratively to create, define, syndicate and manage product information of different types from a variety of sources***
- ***Create a unified view of product information across all data sources, whether they are within the enterprise or from partner organizations***
- ***Support rapid decision making with relevant, real-time reporting on business activities and status***

The IBM Product Optimization Solution provides retailers a comprehensive set of capabilities for aggregating and managing information about products, and making that information available as a service throughout your enterprise. It offers business users insight into product and service performance across channels, enabling retailers to maximize marketing, promotions, customer service and sales activities across channels and throughout the supply chain.

### **Choose a solution that gets to the core of your business challenges**

Your product information is one of your most important assets. By gaining control of your disparate product information, you can use it to make decisions on product mix, promotion

and channel that lead to competitive advantage. By managing this information effectively, you can get more value from the data itself, as well as your investments in global data synchronization, RFID, enterprise data management and multi-channel commerce solutions.

Based on our experience, we know this isn't always easy. Like many companies, you may be faced with skyrocketing volumes of data that your current systems and processes simply can't handle. This amount of data plus insufficient systems can result in inconsistent branding and product information, manual and error-prone processes, and conflicting and disjointed customer interactions. At the same time, you're faced with customers demanding superior service, seamless interactions across sales channels and accurate product information wherever they choose to research and buy—all while you attempt to reduce costs and seek sophisticated promotion and distribution methods to remain competitive.

As these challenges converge, IBM is uniquely positioned to step in to help you solve them. From best-of-breed products such as IBM WebSphere® Product Center for product information management to IBM Retail Industry Models for product insight, IBM can help deliver your business users the

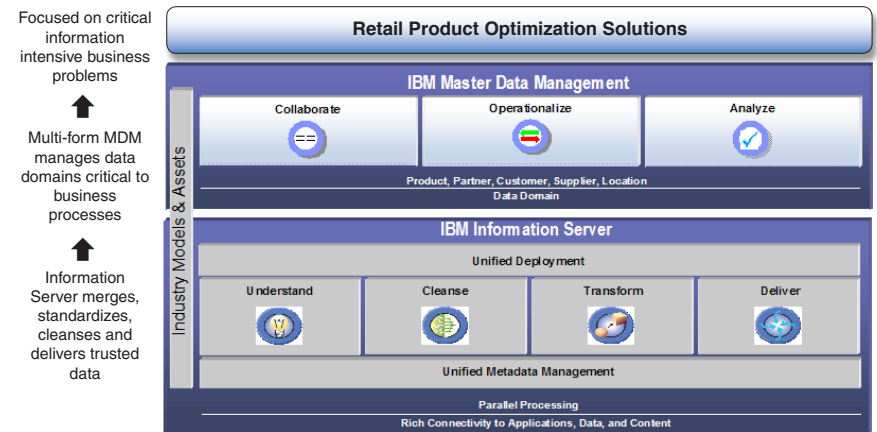


Figure 1: IBM Product Optimization platform for retailers

right view of product information and the product insight that will help you better serve your customers.

### Realize rapid return with a flexible solution framework

At the core of the IBM Product and Service Optimization strategy is a flexible solution framework, designed to deliver rapid return while providing a roadmap for the future. The framework brings together a comprehensive combination of master data management technologies and implementation services to support transformation. Founded on an extensible and re-usable platform, the solution optimizes and integrates your product information for an accurate and comprehensive view of the right information for the right information consumer.

IBM WebSphere Product Center lies at the heart of the master data management solution for product information

management (PIM). It allows you to achieve collaborative decision-making across the distributed enterprise and creates a master repository of product information.

Features include:

- *Create, manage, link and synchronize product information elements within and beyond the enterprise.*
- *Integrate and centrally manage product information typically scattered across a range of systems, such as enterprise resource planning (ERP), legacy, supply chain management, merchandising and functional unit-specific systems.*
- *Link product-related information with terms of trade (such as pricing), and synchronize this information internally with your existing systems and externally with trading partners.*

WebSphere Product Center scales with the growth and complexity of your current and future information management needs. It can help you comply with industry standards, while helping you automate and streamline marketing and sales processes, so you can achieve competitive advantage, not just parity with other retailers.

#### *IBM WebSphere Commerce*

A comprehensive solution for creating world-class, sell-side e-commerce systems, IBM WebSphere Commerce provides robust features to help you market, merchandise and sell your products worldwide. WebSphere Commerce lets your business users directly create compelling and competitive e-commerce Web sites. And it delivers an interactive environment in which your customers can use product information according to their preferences, depending on where they are in the purchasing process.

Together, WebSphere Commerce and WebSphere Product Center software provide a PIM for commerce solution that can help you address sell-side e-commerce challenges, such as:

- *Quickly creating and publishing timely marketing campaigns, and cross-sell, up-sell and price promotions.*
- *Helping ensure that product information is consistent and accurate no matter where customers encounter it.*

- *Being able to extend promotions to your various channels to attract customers and more effectively drive their buying decisions.*
- *Optimizing business processes that can truly differentiate your company's product and services offerings to partners and customers.*

#### *Retail New Product Introduction (NPI) for Product Information Management*

Retailers and suppliers estimate that at any given time, five percent of their active stock-keeping units (SKUs)—an average of 40,000 records—contain inaccuracies<sup>1</sup>. Ongoing item enrichment and maintenance processes that introduce new errors, such as duplicate or conflicting entries across disparate systems, exacerbate the problem of inaccurate product information. Inefficient NPI processes delay the introduction of new products to market and give an advantage to more-agile competitors. The IBM Retail New Product Introduction Solution for PIM helps clients overcome these issues by addressing the root causes of inadequate NPI processes through a workflow and validation schema that leverages the accurate, reliable and consistent product information sourced from WebSphere Product Center.

#### *PIM for Multi-Channel: PIM for Commerce and PIM for Publishing*

Creating and maintaining all the dimensions of information that you need to present about every product

#### **Carrefour lowers costs and improves information quality with IBM solution**

One of the world's largest retailers, Carrefour, recognized a need for internal data standardization and process synchronization. Carrefour needed to solve problems related to data quality and product introduction workflow that were limiting the firm's ability to improve operational efficiency, revenue and customer service targets. Company officials estimated that problems with data quality in their referential systems cost them almost €300M in annual net sales.

To answer these challenges, Carrefour selected an IBM PIM solution, built on WebSphere Product Center, to enhance product information quality while lowering costs. The results? Decreased distribution costs, including elimination of manual modification of 30 percent of product information, 80 percent of which is related to price and promotions. The company also increased speed-to-market and built a foundation for future initiatives such as RFID/EPCIS, all while increasing employee productivity.

across your channels (in store, on website, in catalogs) can be a very time-consuming and staff-intensive process. Use IBM PIM for Commerce to post accurate, enriched product



information to your Web site and IBM PIM for Publishing to do the same for your catalogs, flyers and tear-outs. Combined, these solutions create IBM PIM for Multi-Channel. This multi-channel PIM solution helps you gain control over product data and manage the processes of updating and enhancing it for multiple channels at the same time, helping to bring success to your multi-channel strategies and extend your e-commerce investments.

*IBM Information Infrastructure for Retail: Retail Data Warehouse, Retail Industry Models and IBM Information Server*

Once you've built your single view of product information, you can use that information to get actionable insight by leveraging IBM retail data warehouse and industry models. Gain insight to make real-time decisions regarding product mix, product performance and promotions. Along with the robust IBM Information Server, you can unlock information from application and database silos which keep your information disparate and separated today to gain insight in real time that used to take weeks and months to create and analyze. You may already be asking:

- *How can we determine the effectiveness of a promotion?*
- *Should we modify future promotions to optimize results based on past promotions?*

- *Do we understand the profitability or performance of certain products by channel?*
- *Could consumer transaction sizes be increased?*

Leveraging IBM retail industry models can help you automate some of this product analysis and deliver reports to your team to drive decisions. The IBM retail data warehouse will import the most complete, robust product item master file and organize and hold this information in a structured way that best supports analytical reporting.

**Invest for the future**

Through real-life experience across client deployments and recent acquisitions of best-of-breed MDM technologies, IBM has assembled the most robust and complete product and service optimization platform on the market today. But rather than stop there, IBM is expanding its ability to support clients as they struggle to address the intensifying customer data challenges—by continuously strengthening our core capability and by adding new tools to the platform. For example, recent investments in multi-form MDM will enable clients to support a heterogeneous mix of product, vendor, customer, location and account information.

As products, markets and technology evolve, managing product information

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\*Source: IBM/WorldWideRetail Exchange Survey, 2005.

and making it available as a service will be an increasing challenge. The future environment will require active and dynamic access to the full range of product information, in line and in context, accurately and in real time, so that you can address your bottom-line goals. IBM recognizes these challenges, and stands ready to support leading retailers as you confront these challenges and transform the way you improve product and service information management.

**For more information**

For additional information about IBM Product and Service Optimization Solutions for Retail, please contact your IBM sales representative or visit:

[ibm.com/software/data/](http://ibm.com/software/data/) or  
[ibm.com/software/software/data/ips](http://ibm.com/software/software/data/ips).

**TAKE BACK CONTROL WITH Information Management**