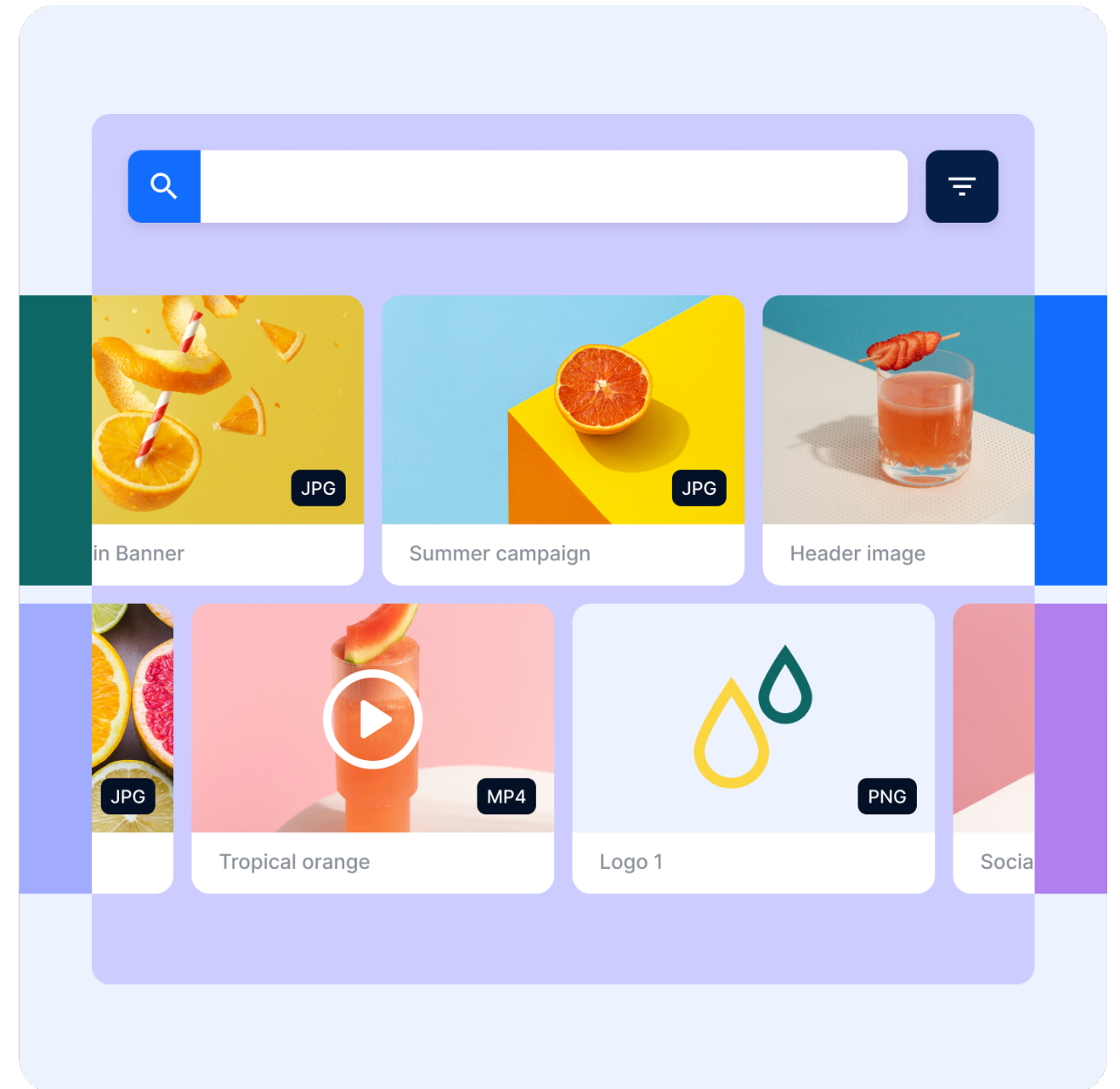


# Digital asset management comparison guide



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# The modern day DAM

Creating, managing, and distributing branded assets from one central location has become essential for brands looking to gain a competitive edge in today's digital landscape.

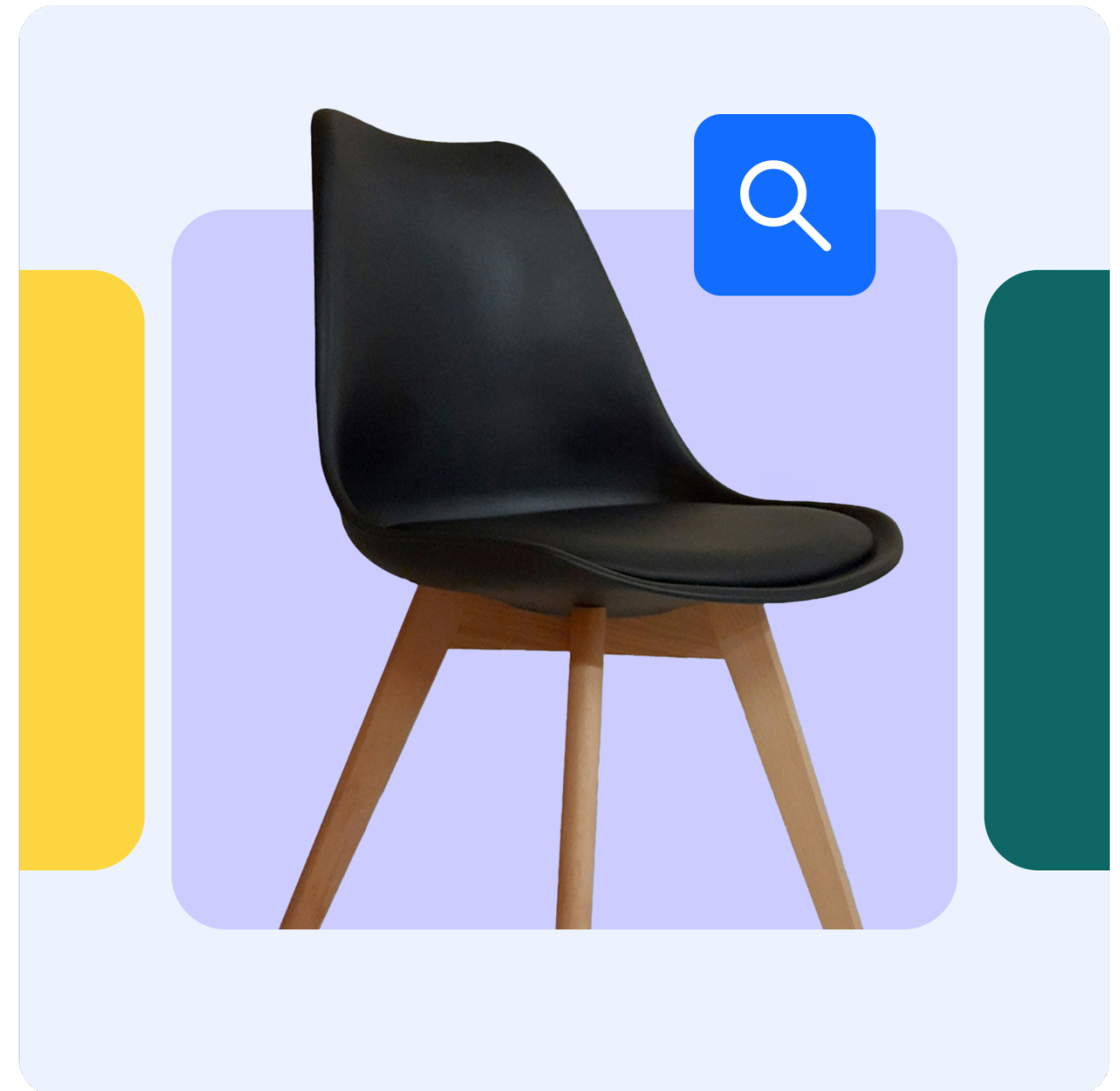
That's why Digital Asset Management (DAM) has evolved from a standalone solution for storing and sharing files, to the foundation of a connected ecosystem of martech and e-commerce infrastructure—enabling you to deliver content across a network of integrated platforms.

**If you're reading this, then chances are you're already on the hunt for a DAM solution.**

**This guide aims to cover all the features a modern day DAM should have, and help you identify which features best suit your specific business case.**

# Why invest in a DAM?

**A DAM platform enables your organization to improve efficiency, scale content, reduce costs, and quickly respond to market changes while preserving brand identity.**



## Investing in a DAM can yield a number of other benefits for brands, including:

- 1 Driving growth and maximizing return on investment
- 2 Getting content delivered to the market—fast
- 3 Automating manual and tedious tasks
- 4 Creating consistency across all brand channels
- 5 Scaling content production to meet brand growth
- 6 Improving customer engagement and loyalty
- 7 Improving operational efficiency by taking advantage of AI and automation capabilities across the asset lifecycle

# Identifying your company's requirements

Before we dive into the features, take a moment to answer the following questions to better understand your requirements.

## 1. What are you looking for in a DAM solution?

Does your team spend too much time wrestling with disorganized assets? Is secure media sharing a priority? Or do you want better media organization? Answering these questions can help you identify the type of features that you'll need to help you reach your goals.

## 2. What type of digital assets do you work with?

A DAM solution should support all of the file types that your organization uses. List all of the file types that will need to be supported by your DAM platform, such as images, videos, documents, PDFs, creative source files, etc.

## 3. Who will be using your DAM?

Think about who will be using your DAM platform on a daily basis, and write down their pain points when it comes to creating, managing, and distributing content. This will help you identify which features you need in the next section. Will external parties also need access to your DAM? If so, consider what kind of access they will require.

## 4. Do you need to integrate your DAM with your current software ecosystem?

A highly connectable DAM should be the single source of truth for all your digital content across systems and channels. For example, if you need to deliver images from your DAM platform to your website or e-commerce site, make sure the solution has an integration with your CMS or e-commerce platform.

## 5. Does the platform solution support your metadata?

Metadata standards, such as IPTC, Exif, XMP, should be supported by your DAM solution

## 6. Do you want a DAM with AI and automation capabilities?

Leading DAM providers have advanced AI capabilities, such as similarity and image search, automated metaproperty behaviors, and AI-based tagging. These features enable the search and discovery of assets within the DAM, and improve the consistency of metadata and tagging at upload.

# Hosting and licensing

## On-premise vs. cloud-based

There are two different types of DAM solutions available on the market. You can either host your own DAM solution on-premise, meaning that it will be hosted on your company server. Alternatively, your DAM vendor can host the solution for you. This is also known as a 'software as a service' or 'SaaS' model. SaaS allows you to access your DAM tool via a web browser. Keep reading to learn more about the pros and cons of each option.

**NOTE: Some vendors also offer 'hybrid' solutions that combine on-premise functionalities with SaaS capabilities. For companies with particularly niche requirements, a hybrid solution might be the way to go.**

Deployment models	Description
On-premise DAM	You host your DAM system on your own server and are responsible for the infrastructure and updates.
Cloud-based DAM	Your DAM system is hosted by your vendor. The software is provided as a service (SaaS).
Hybrid DAM	Your DAM system is hosted both in the cloud and on-premise simultaneously.



# Pros of an on-premise DAM

- **Not reliant on an internet connection**  
Your DAM solution will run independently of your internet connection, so you won't be affected by outages or slow speeds.
- **Total control**  
Your IT staff will have complete control over the software, including the version installed, feature updates, and data security.
- **More flexibility**  
You can customize the software to meet your specific needs.

# Pros of a cloud-based DAM

- **Scalable and subscription-based**  
No upfront investment, pay a monthly or yearly fee, and easily scale up.
- **No need for dedicated IT support**  
Most cloud-based DAM vendors provide automatic updates, new features, and system maintenance.
- **External access**  
SaaS solutions are accessible via web browsers from anywhere in the world.

# Digital asset management features

In this section, you'll find a comprehensive list of all the essential features of a DAM platform, grouped into the three content lifecycle categories:

- **Creation**
- **Management**
- **Distribution**

**A Digital Asset Management solution is the single source of truth for all brand, campaign, and product-related assets—helping global teams create, manage, find, and deliver assets more efficiently for a world-class customer content experience.**

## Create

- Scaling content creation
- Asset workflow
- Content workflow

## Manage

- Search functionalities
- Metadata handling and support
- Supported file types
- Image and video manipulation
- Upload and import
- Brand consistency
- User access control

## Distribute

- File sharing and web publishing
- Integrations

Create

# Scaling content creation

Creating content at scale means producing high volumes of high-quality content quickly and efficiently—while always maintaining focus on quality rather than quantity. Even though content creation is a huge part of the content lifecycle, features that help you scale content creation are often overlooked when comparing DAM vendors.

Templating and creative automation tools enable brands to create high-quality digital content quickly and get more content to market. These features are especially handy when you have a high-volume of manual or repetitive work, such as localizing content in different languages, or creating different formats for A/B testing.



## Digital brand templates features

Feature	Explanation
Advance templating	Store and manage image, video and animation designs as templates and control which elements can be modified with element locking.
Role-specific UI	Different UI depending on if you are a content designer or a content creator.
Animation and brand presets	Standardize visual elements with readily available animation, transitions and brand-specific presets.
Sharing and collaboration	Organize your designs, and choose view and edit permissions.
Bulk actions and multi-sizes	Make bulk edits or adaptations to your master content and all its variations in one go.
Import & export from/to common formats	Import existing designs from formats like Adobe Premiere XML*, Photoshop PSD and Sketch and download videos and images in the desired format for immediate use.

# Print brand templates features

Feature	Explanation
Customizable templates	Convert InDesign files into easily editable templates.
Easy-to-use inline editor	HTML Based web editor with real-time edit and preview.
Template presets	Create unlimited versions of the initial template and save them as presets.
Print-ready output	Automatic creation of web-version or print-ready PDF, with country-specific cropping marks.
Approval flows	Created content is automatically sent to the next responsible person for review and approval.
DAM integration	Insert images from the DAM directly into templates or define which collection can be used.
Permission settings	Give project access to specific users or groups.

Create

# Asset workflow

Asset workflow features help brands streamline the review and approval of content from ideation to delivery. If you work with multiple stakeholders on the creation of digital assets, integrated workflow tools are essential to make sure that all content produced is compliant and on-brand.

**Workflow features enable brands to easily collaborate and communicate with both internal departments and external agencies to streamline recurring processes—requests, reviews, and approvals—and get your assets across the finish line faster.**

## Asset workflow features

Feature	Explanation
Workflow management	Organize recurring activities using campaigns, projects, jobs, approvers and deadlines and leverage high-level dashboard overview.
Workflow customization	Map workflows against your processes, create as many stages in a job as you need and centralize briefings through web forms and custom input fields.
Real-time collaboration	Annotate images, documents, and videos, reject or accept drafts and communicate along the way through comments, private messages and automated notifications.
Version history	Compare file versions in jobs and easily remove those that are no longer relevant.
Advanced permissioning	Assign responsible individuals/groups for each workflow/project phase and manage permissions for internal/external users.



## Create

# Content workflow

Is creating editorial content an important component of your marketing strategy? And are you struggling to keep up with the demand? If you answered yes to both of these questions, then finding a DAM with an integrated content workflow is essential.

Content workflow features enable organizations to create any type of editorial content at scale. With features like real-time collaboration and templating, brands can speed up content production, reduce admin tasks, and automate the approval process by providing teams with clear content structure and requirements.

**If you want AI to speed up content creation, look for content workflows that have AI Assist capabilities. AI Assist can generate first drafts, extend, shorten & translate text, fix spelling & grammar, and change the tone of voice.**



## Content workflow features

Feature	Explanation
Centralized content dashboard	All your content initiatives in one place, organized and easy-to-find.
Advanced content structuring	Templates, components, and field settings with guidelines.
Advanced workflow	Automate multiple workflows, workflow assignments and due dates.
Integration with tech stack	APIs, integrations, and out-of-the-box export formats.
Real-time collaboration and sharing	Work together at the same time, similar to content collaboration tools like Google Docs.
Direct DAM assets import	Pull your approved assets straight from your DAM.

AI assist	Create first drafts of written content in seconds, spellcheck existing content, and translate text.
Role permissions (AI)	Admins can decide who can and cannot create content with AI assist.
Highlight AI content	Content generated by AI is highlighted.
Revision history (AI)	Snapshots showing AI contribution.

## Manage

# Search functionalities

Search functionalities are one of the key features of a DAM solution. These features make your employees' lives easier by enabling them to find and retrieve assets quickly.

There are a number of ways to search for an asset within a DAM platform, and knowing how your employees search for assets will help you identify which particular search functionalities you need.

Keeping your taxonomy straightforward is another way to make sure the right assets show up when searching and filtering.

Taxonomy is a scheme of classification used to categorize and organize digital assets, consisting of descriptive terms used to label assets to make them findable.

Alongside filtering, a DAM solution should also permit a **basic quick search, meaning you simply type in a keyword, and all files marked by that keyword pop up. Leading DAM vendors also leverage AI-powered search functionalities, such as searching by image or by text-in-image, as well as similarity search, which allows you to discover visually related assets.**

## DAM search features

Feature	Explanation
Ability to add custom metadata filter	The possibility to extend your DAM system with custom filters, such as “GPS Location” which allows for a more detailed filtering.
Filter by IPTC metadata fields	Filter your media by descriptive metadata, such as “Title” and “Description”.
Filter by EXIF metadata fields	Filter your media by technical metadata, such as “DPI” or “Camera Type”.
Quick-search function (AKA keyword search)	A Google-like search function. Type in a keyword and get a list of search results.
Automatic duplicate finder	Your DAM system detects duplicate files in the database and suggests them for deletion or versioning.
Specific color search	Choose a color and receive images which contain that color (HTML code).

Boolean search	Ability to search using word/phrase combinations.
Recently added file search	Quickly find recently added files.
Text-in-image search	The DAM search engine not only scans through metadata, but also through document content.
Vertical (category) search	Filter your media by general characteristics (such as searching for images categorized as “beach”, “mountain”, or “people”).
Multilingual categories	Enable users to search in different languages.
Similarity search (AI)	Leverage AI and machine learning to search based on general queries such as fun, climate, leadership, etc.
Image search (AI)	Select an image and search for similar images, or search for images using any URL.

## Manage

# Metadata handling and support

Metadata is information that describes your media assets and their content. An effective search functionality requires metadata to narrow down your search process so you can find exactly what you're looking for. Metadata can be extracted by your DAM for read-only purposes, or for both reading, editing, and/or writing.

There are three main metadata standards:

- EXIF (embedded digital data, such as camera type and DPI)
- IPTC (descriptive data, such as title and description)
- XMP (embedding data into the file itself)

A more basic type of metadata is tagging. Tags are keywords that you can manually add to your media files to make them searchable (alongside fields such as “Title” and “Description”).

AI-driven DAM systems analyze visual characteristics and automatically assign relevant tags to every asset, eliminating the need for manual tagging and enhancing asset findability without requiring additional resources.

**Pro tip: You will also need to know what types of metadata you require in order to best organize your media—as well as what metadata already exists and whether you are planning to include other media formats in the future.**

## Metadata features

Feature	Explanation
Manual association with a file	Metadata can be added manually by the user.
AI-based tagging	Smart tagging based on visual characteristics, eliminating manual work upon upload.
IPTC (reading/writing)	Extracts and/or edits descriptive meta- data (such as title and description).
XMP (reading/writing)	Extracts custom added metadata (such as tools used for media creation) and allows users to edit custom XMP metadata.
EXIF (reading/writing)	Extracts and permits users to edit technical metadata (such as DPI).



GPS coordinates (reading/writing)	Extracts and permits users to edit location-based GPS metadata.
Tag (reading/writing)	Extracts and permits users to edit keywords/tags from media.
Automate metaproperty behaviors	Create business rules that accelerate the tagging process and maintain a well-organized taxonomy and DAM.

## Manage

# Supported file types

In order to get the most out of your chosen DAM solution, you need to make sure that it supports all the files that your organization uses on a regular basis—including audio files, video, images, documents, etc.

It also has to support the formats you work with during the content creation process, such as InDesign (.indd), Photoshop (.psd), and Premier Pro (.prproj).

## Useful features when uploading or searching for files:

- Media previews allow you to view files within the DAM without having to download the file, which is especially useful for large files such as videos and TIFF files. Keep in mind that just because a file is supported, it doesn't necessarily mean that you can preview it.
- Automatic file conversion is another time-saving feature that some DAM platforms offer. Conversion means that you can upload a file in a specific format (such as a PSD), and download it in another format (such as a JPEG).
- Most DAM platforms allow you to set up derivatives, which automatically create different versions of the original file. For instance, this can be helpful if you need to download a smaller version of the original file.

## Overview of different file types

Feature	Explanation
Image file formats (supported/preview)	bmp, gif, jpg, jpeg, png, tif
Camera Raw (supported/preview)	cr2, crw, raw, k25, kdc, dcr, mrw, mef, mos, arw, pcn, pxn, nef, sr2, pef, srf, orf, dng
Audio/Video (supported/preview)	avi, mp3, swf, v, mpg, mpeg, m2v, wav, m4v, mp4, wmv, mov, wma
Microsoft Office (supported/preview)	ppt, pptx, doc, docx, xlx, xlxs
Page Layout (supported/preview)	eps, ai, indd, qxd, psd, pdf
Text (supported/preview)	txt, html, htm
Compression (supported/preview)	sit, sitx, zip, rar

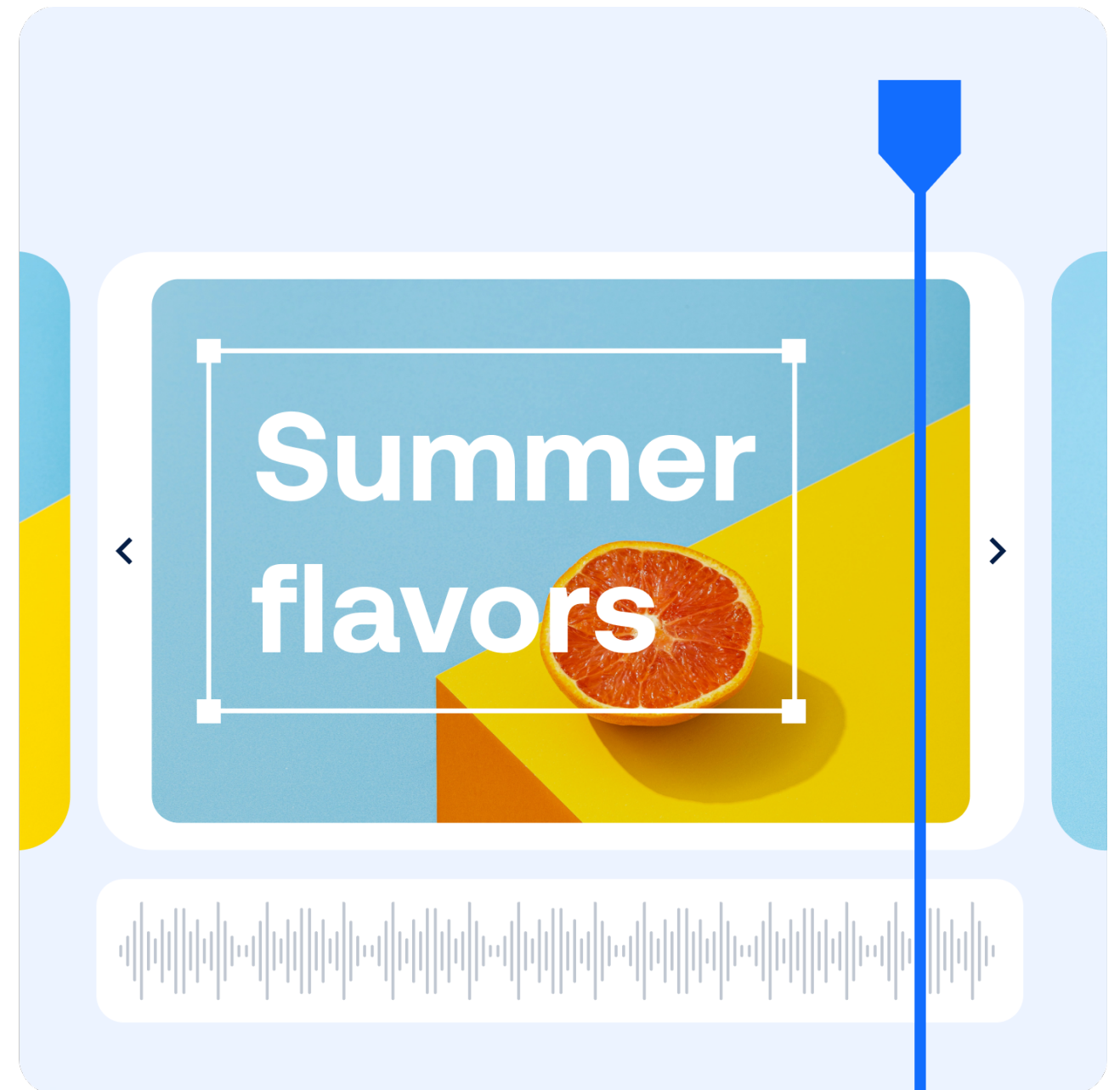
## Manage

# Image and video manipulation

While your creative team might use manipulation programs like Photoshop to edit photos, graphics, and videos, having this functionality in your DAM platform can speed up the content creation process.

That's because it eliminates the need to switch between multiple software applications. Instead of exporting media, editing externally, and reimporting, you can make the necessary changes directly within your DAM platform.

This streamlined process enhances efficiency, speeds up content creation, and facilitates quick adjustments to visual assets, ultimately saving valuable time in your creative workflow.



## Image and video editing features

Feature	Explanation
Resizing & cropping	Change the size of your images and videos, or remove the outer parts of your images to improve framing.
Format conversion	Convert your files to another format (for example, from .doc to .pdf).
Flipping & rotating	Create mirror-reversed images or change the orientation of images from landscape to portrait.
Change color space	Adjust the color space of your pictures.
Bulk edit files	Edit multiple files at the same time.
Watermark	Add custom designed watermarks to file previews or conversion formats.

## Manage

# Upload and import

Whether you're moving to an on-premise DAM solution or a cloud-based one, you'll be required to import all of your existing digital assets onto the new platform. As you can imagine, manually adding metadata to all of your imported files one-by-one would be incredibly time-consuming.

That's why most vendors will recommend that you upload multiple files at once, and edit the metadata in batches. During the upload process, you should be able edit your assets in bulk, allowing you to change titles, adjust tags, and write descriptions for multiple files.

Additionally, if you often get sent media by external photographers or agencies—but you don't want to give them permanent access to your platform—you should choose a DAM that allows uploads from external parties.



☰ Filename / date

🗨 Automated tags

Young Woman iPhone

Work Street Portrait

Yellow City Commute

↓ Available files

jpg L

jpg M

jpg S

↓ Download all files

## Upload and import features

Feature	Explanation
Single or multiple file upload	Uploading one file or several at a time.
Extracting and editing metadata during upload	The DAM system will automatically extract available metadata during media import. You can also add or edit metadata during file import.
Drag and drop file uploading	Select files from your computer and drag them into the relevant browser window.
Maximum file size or quantity for upload at once	Sets a limit on maximum size or quantity of files that can be uploaded at one time.
Upload additional or related files	Add additional attached files to existing ones.
Upload files without logging in	Third parties can upload files without being a registered user in your DAM platform.

## Manage

# Brand consistency

Building a recognizable and consistent brand across all touchpoints is essential for building customer loyalty. Misuse of brand elements and trademarks leads to reputation risks and financial damages, and, if a brand's image is compromised, customers lose trust.

Nowadays, with the number of stakeholders involved in building a brand, keeping control over how your brand is represented is challenging unless you have the right tools in place to help you promote brand consistency within your company and to the outside world.

As your DAM will be the home of your branded assets, it's a good idea to search for a platform that also allows you to embed or create brand guidelines. This way, you can centralize your assets as well as the rules around using them.

**DAM platforms with integrated brand guidelines enable brand managers to create an interactive digital home for all their guidelines—branding, legal, manuals, processes, and more—and unite and educate everyone in the organization on how to create and use on-brand assets.**



## Brand guidelines features

Feature	Explanation
Embedding brand assets	Insert assets such as logos, fonts, and templates in your guidelines, allowing direct download.
Duplication of guides, sections and pages	Clone entire guides or simply replicate sections/pages within them for easy re-use while safeguarding consistency.
Advanced access rights management	Manage permissions to view or edit your brand guidelines: set to public, all users, specific users, or private.
Theme sets for single or multiple brands	Apply custom styling with font colors and images of choice.
Guide grouping	Group guides based on categories like sub-brands, markets, department-specific documentation, etc.

Manage

# User access control

**Managing user access is essential when you have a number of employees and external parties active in your DAM platform.**

User rights can help you avoid potential information leaks and deliver the right content to the right users by setting specific permission rights and safeguarding what actions can be made for each asset.

As an admin user, you'll probably want to be able to control who can access and view specific assets. Implementing user access control in your DAM provides heightened security and better control over who can view and manage assets.



## User access control features

Feature	Explanation
Secure login	Each user of the DAM system has their own password-protected account.
Defined user profiles	Ability to create custom user profiles by defining the system rights (including edit, upload, and download permissions) of individual users or user groups.
Access control	Control which users can access what parts of your DAM system taxonomy.
Single sign-on	Sign into Bynder using your existing corporate credentials.
Google sign in	Sign into Bynder using your existing Google credentials.

**Distribute**

# File sharing and web publishing

## File sharing

Does your organization spend a lot of time sending files to employees, partners, and clients via email? If so, a DAM with file-sharing features might be exactly what you need.

As you probably already know, sending attachments over 20 MB via email is practically impossible. What's more, file sharing software like FTP or Dropbox don't offer the robust filtering and content organization features that a DAM provides.

If file sharing is important to you, you need to investigate whether your chosen DAM solution offers convenient and stress-free sharing features such as embed codes, public sharing, and secure individual sharing.

## Web publishing

If you want to seamlessly deliver content from your DAM directly to your CMS or e-commerce website, you should make sure that the platform has a Dynamic Asset Transformation (DAT) module.

DAT handles asset transformations at scale, enabling you to automatically generate images that are optimized for each channel, platform or device. This saves teams from the hassle of having to create a large volume of versions manually.

By delivering optimized images, DAT can help to reduce the loading times on your website, lower bounce rates, and improve your SEO rank.

# Sharing and distribution features

Feature	Explanation
Embed codes for websites	The DAM system provides codes that can be copied and pasted into a content management system, so that files can be downloaded directly from the company website.
Social media sharing	Directly share media from your DAM system to social networks.
Creating and sharing file collections	Group media files and share them as media collections from the DAM or via email.
Instant download link	The DAM system provides links where media can be downloaded instantly without having to manually download from a designated download page.
Public collections with gallery view	Create media galleries which are publicly accessible via a link.

File transfer	Secure file transfer without the need to store the asset in the DAM.
Transformation options (DAT*)	Large list of transformation options to automatically resize, adjust, and modify images for use.
Transformation presets (DAT*)	Manage and define transformations from within the DAM.
Focus point (DAT*)	Utilize focus points on assets in DAM to crop, resize etc. without losing focus on image.
Delivery metrics (DAT*)	Get analytics and insights for the usage of your assets outside of the DAM.

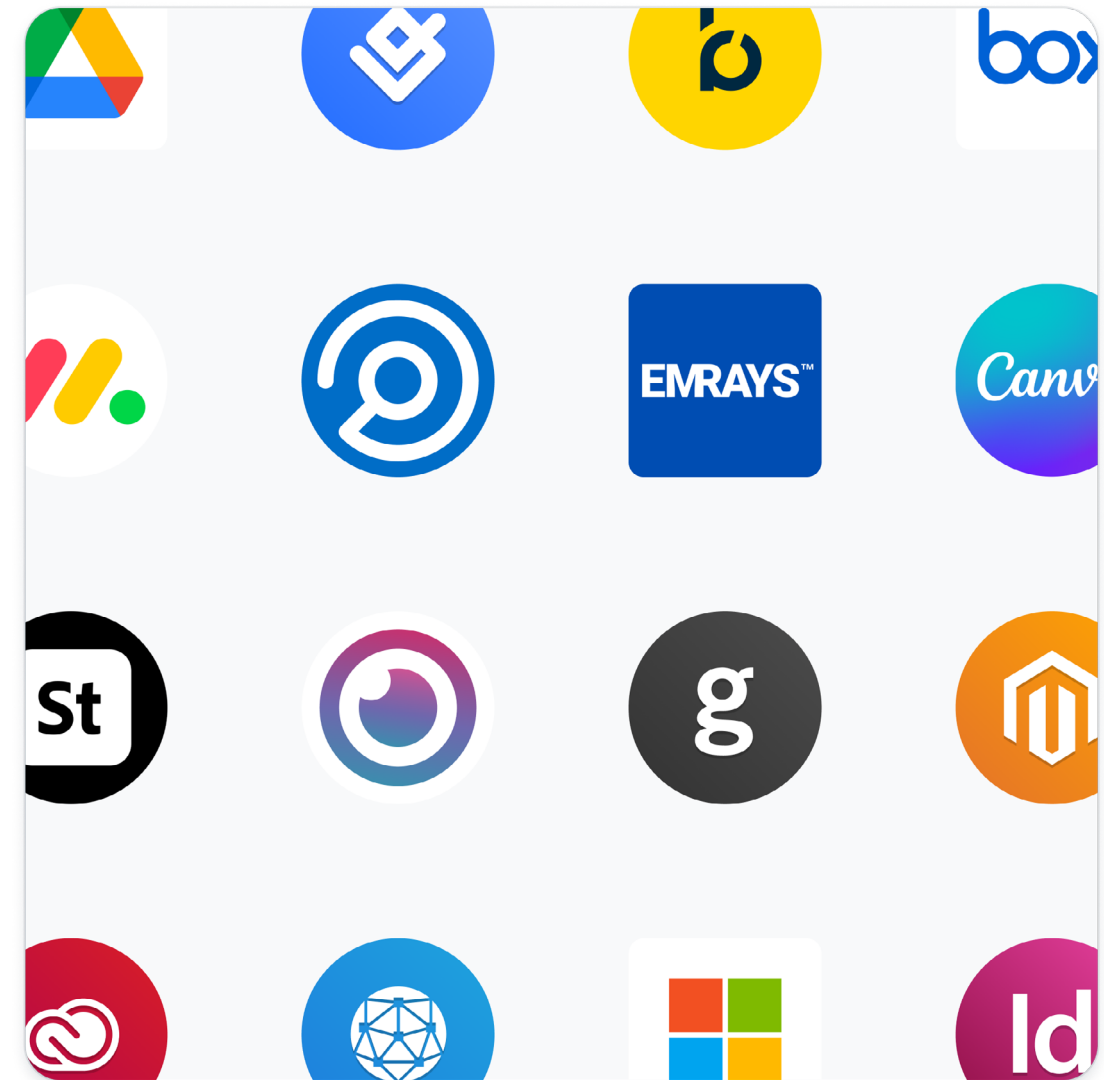
\* Digital asset transformation (DAT) is the process of converting digital assets into different forms and sizes.

Distribute

# Integrations

Leading DAM solutions sit at the heart of your connected martech ecosystem. That's why your DAM should provide integration options that enable seamless connections and offer ultimate interoperability between the DAM and other business-critical applications.

With the emergence of headless and composable architecture, there are a lot more possibilities to create better content experiences. By bringing together the best-of-class technologies and augmenting them through integrations, they can centralize and distribute content to any kind of front-end channel to create content experiences with the flexibility to adapt rapidly to changing needs.



## Most common types of DAM integrations

Feature	Explanation
Creative tools	Browse available digital assets directly in creative tools, and save new versions of assets in the DAM.
CMS plugins	Directly import assets (such as images and videos) from your DAM system into your content management system (CMS).
Product information management (PIM)	Browse and select DAM assets for products, automatically sync assets to your PIM, and enrich asset metadata with product data provided by your PIM.
E-commerce platforms	Deliver up-to-date and optimized assets to your e-commerce site.
Customer relationship management (CRM)	Attach DAM assets to objects within your CRM as attachments, a reference URL, or import them into the your CRM library to be able to attach or display inline in emails.
Digital experience platforms (DXP)	Seamlessly add images from your DAM to your DXP and enable automatic updates when an asset is updated in the DAM using reference URLs.



# Other features

There are many other features that can be offered by DAM solutions. For example, if you work in a global organization, you might want your DAM system to support multiple languages and allow users to switch between languages.

If you want your DAM to reflect the visual branding identity of your business, you should pay close attention to a vendor's custom theming capabilities.



## Additional DAM features

Feature	Explanation
Multiple language support	The DAM system supports different languages, and allows users to switch between languages.
Open image bank with online payment features	The DAM system has a shopping cart and payment modules like those found in web shops.
API	An interface which allows users to sync media stored in the DAM system directly to other systems.
Media accessibility	The DAM system is accessible from mobile devices.
Desktop integration option	Access the DAM platform directly from your desktop.
Customization options	The visual style of the DAM system can be completely adapted to your brand's visual identity.
Asset usage analytics	Access data on usage of assets to efficiently manage adoption and prove ROI.

# Feature checklist template

Now that you know all the possibilities of a DAM platform, it's time to create your own feature wishlist. To help you out, we've created this handy interactive template.

You can use it to build out your perfect DAM for your business case. Once it's complete you can export it and send it to potential DAM vendors.

<b>Digital brand templates</b>	Direct DAM assets import	<b>Metadata handling and support</b>	Guide grouping
Advanced templating	Generative AI	AI-based tagging	<b>User access control</b>
Role-specific UI	Role permissions (AI)	Automate metaproperty behaviors	Defined user profiles
Animation and Brand presets	Highlight AI content	<b>Upload and import</b>	Access control
Sharing and collaboration	Revision history (AI)	Single or multiple file upload	Single sign-on
Bulk actions and multi-sizes	<b>Search functionalities</b>	Extracting and editing metadata during upload	<b>File sharing and web publishing</b>
Import & export from/to common formats	Ability to add custom metadata filters	Drag and drop file uploading	Creating and sharing file collections
<b>Content Workflow</b>	Keyword search function	Maximum file size or quantity for upload at once	File transfer
Centralized content dashboard	Automatic duplicate finder	<b>Brand guidelines</b>	Transformation options (DAT)
Advanced content structuring	Text-in-image search	Embedding brand assets	Transformation presets (DAT)
Advanced workflow	Similarity search (AI)	Duplication of guides, sections and pages	Focus point (DAT)
Integration with tech stack	Image search (AI)	Advanced access rights management	Delivery metrics (DAT)
Real-time collaboration and sharing		Theme sets for single or multiple brands	

**Bynder's leading Digital Asset Management solution provides a single source of truth for brand-, campaign-, and product-related assets.**

**Its powerful functionalities, integrated modules, and broad range of integrations enable teams to create, store, manage, and distribute digital content efficiently, delivering a world-class content experience.**

**Want to learn more about Bynder's DAM?  
[Download the full feature guide here](#)**



Bynder goes far beyond managing digital assets. Our AI-powered digital asset management platform enables teams to conquer the chaos of proliferating content, touchpoints, and relationships in order to thrive.

With powerful and intuitive solutions that embrace the way people want to work and a richly integrated ecosystem, Bynder is the brand ally that unifies and transforms the creation and sharing of assets, inspiring teams, delighting customers, and elevating businesses.

For more information, visit: [www.bynder.com](https://www.bynder.com)