

Building a House of Brands: Whirlpool Corporation's Blueprint for Success

*Whirlpool's digital asset management architecture provides
the enterprise pillar to protect and expand brand value*

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Whirlpool Corporation (NYSE:WHR) is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances, with annual sales of over \$13 billion, 68,000 employees, and 50 manufacturing and technology research centers around the globe. Whirlpool's primary brand names -- KitchenAid, Roper, Bauknecht, Inglis, Brastemp, Consul and its global Whirlpool brand -- are marketed and sold through direct sales offices in more than 170 countries worldwide. Sustaining its market position requires Whirlpool to draw from an exceptional foundation of business strategy, technology, and employees every day. With pillars based on innovative design and development, consistent brand management, and proactive customer relationship management, Whirlpool has established the groundwork it needs to support a global house of brands.



Table of Contents

- INTRODUCTION.....3**
 - CASE STUDY OVERVIEW3
 - ACKNOWLEDGMENTS3
 - USING THIS CASE STUDY4
- IN THEIR OWN WORDS: THE WHIRLPOOL PERSPECTIVE4**
 - RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM.....4
 - THE OPPORTUNITY4
 - PRODUCT SELECTION5
 - MEASURING SUCCESS5
- WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION COMPANY BACKGROUND.....6**
 - BUILDING THE CORPORATE BRAND.....6
 - ESTABLISHING A HOUSE OF BRANDS.....7
 - GOING GLOBAL WITH THE HOUSE7
- THE PROBLEM: SUSTAINING BRAND VALUE IN A GLOBAL MARKET.....8**
 - THE NEED: MANAGE BRANDS AS ASSETS9
 - CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: SPEED TO MARKET, COST REDUCTION10
 - THE NEED: PROTECT BRAND VALUE.....11
 - CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: BRAND CONSISTENCY.....12
 - THE NEED: FLEXIBLE, SELF-SERVICE ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION12
 - CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE13
- SOLUTION COMPONENTS.....14**
 - PRODUCT COMPONENTS AND ARCHITECTURE14
 - BEST PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATION CHANGES.....15
- RESULTS16**
 - SPEED TO MARKET, COST REDUCTIONS16
 - BRAND VALUE PROTECTION17
 - COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE17
- A SUPPLIER’S VOICE: ARTESIA DIGITAL MEDIA, A DIVISION OF OPEN TEXT ..18**
- CONCLUSIONS.....19**
- ABOUT CONTENT TECHNOLOGY WORKS21**
- PARTNER LOGOS: CONTENT TECHNOLOGY WORKS SPONSORS21**

Introduction

Content Technology Works (CTW) is an industry initiative, administered by *The Gilbane Report*, to develop and share content technology best practices and success stories. The premise is that when given enough proven recipes for success, enterprise consumers will be able to adapt and replicate that success for themselves—increasing productivity and confidence.

Success stories are written by *The Gilbane Report*, with final editorial control resting entirely in the hands of the adopter. The result is that:

- Vendors do not control content.
- Success stories are as opinionated and as jargon free as the adopter prefers.
- Analysis is included from *The Gilbane Report* and invited contributors.

CTW case studies provide organizations with best practices in content technologies and strategies for securing funding, measuring actual value, and driving adoption. For more information on the CTW program, see page 20 or visit http://www.gilbane.com/technology_works.html.

Case Study Overview

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances, with annual sales of over \$13 billion, 68,000 employees, and 50 manufacturing and technology research centers around the globe. Over the last decade, this corporation has transformed itself from a regional manufacturing and trade-focused business into a global, consumer-driven enterprise.

As described in its annual report, the company's growth strategy has been to introduce innovative new products, strengthen customer loyalty for its brands, continue to expand its global footprint, add or enhance distribution channels and, where appropriate, make strategic acquisitions which enhance the company's innovative global product offering.

Successful execution of this strategy requires Whirlpool to sustain corporate brand recognition while simultaneously expanding brand value and identity for multiple product lines positioned for distinct market segments. Centralized creation, management, and distribution of brand assets is critical to this endeavor, serving as a pillar for brand management programs, marketing campaigns, and co-promotions with trade customers.

This case study describes the implementation and corporate impact of the digital asset management (DAM) infrastructure within the Creative Works group, an internal organization that provides creative and production services in support of all Whirlpool Corporation brands. This success story outlines the technology and business processes that enable Creative Works to enhance enterprise-wide initiatives for improving speed to market, maintaining brand consistency, and increasing competitive advantage.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the generous contribution that Whirlpool made to the development of this case study. The company allocated the time of talented and heavily committed management for the purpose of improving the understanding and adoption of enterprise content technology. We especially thank the individuals with whom we spoke when researching the case study. Their passion for getting things right for their customers is a significant part of the Whirlpool story.

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Using this case study

This case study outlines essential elements of applying digital asset management (DAM) to the needs of a worldwide manufacturer. This is an individual story about one organization, Whirlpool Corporation. While Whirlpool's approach may not be universal, its success in solving critical problems is indisputable. It is not possible to generalize Whirlpool's approach into a universal formula, but there is much here that will be useful to other organizations with similar corporate goals.

In Their Own Words: The Whirlpool Perspective

Recognizing the Problem

What were the symptoms in your organization that brought this need to your attention?

"Manual, laborious processes prone to human error increased the potential for distributing incorrect product images or model numbers. Irritating our trade customers or confusing our consumers is not an option for a leader in the industry." – *Bill Langbehn, Director of Creative Works*

"We were responding to an average of 10 or more phone requests per day for images and burning anywhere from 10-40 CDs per week, some with only one file. – *Tanyia Coleman, Digital Content Coordinator*

How did you identify what specific content technologies were appropriate?

"We wanted a totally digital environment. Before the DAM implementation, the best-case scenario for fulfilling image requests was one day, assuming we could find it; three days was more the average. Speed to market was *not* the message we were sending to our customers." – *Jennifer Knapp, Manager of Photo Services*

"Internally we have multiple agencies working on behalf of our brand. Externally, we have thousands of trade customers that advertise our products. Presenting a consistent brand image is of utmost importance and a robust digital asset management system is a critical tool to ensure it happens." – *Angie Seger, Marketing Communications Manager, Whirlpool Brand Marketing*

"We have a constant churn of licensed products on shopkitchenaid.com whose availability depends on the nature and duration of branding agreements. We can't afford Web site updating processes that are time-consuming. Having centralized and accessible repository of images for licensed products images is critical to our business processes. *Greg Raklovits, Brand Manager, KitchenAid Portables and Licensed Goods*

The Opportunity

What did you want to be able to do by using content technologies for brand management?

"Creative Works is committed to our 'anytime, anywhere, anyway' mission for meeting internal and external customer needs. To do so, we need to manage brand messaging by

ensuring that accurate images are delivered in the correct manner to the correct channel. This level of knowledge was anecdotal and decentralized by product line and brand before the implementation of our enterprise DAM strategy. We set out to fix it.” – *Gregg Crandall, Content and Solutions Consultant*

“Trade customer relationships are critical to Whirlpool’s market success. We want to consistently serve and showcase our trade customers with quality images for branded co-promotions and product demonstrations to ensure global brand consistency for all parties across all mediums.” – *Jennifer Knapp, Manager of Photo Services*

Product Selection

What considerations shaped your choice of an enterprise solution?

“We knew that the scalability, extensibility, and manageability of the DAM system would be critical to our success. We estimated 600 users in Year 2 and topped 5,000 by Year 2.” – *Arsalan Siddiqui; Technical Analyst, Creative Works*

“Usability, security and the flexibility to support multiple user levels – from the casual business user to brand Webmasters to external advertising agency and trade customer representatives – was paramount.” *Gregg Crandall, Content and Solutions Consultant*

Which vendors did you select and what were the overriding considerations?

“Artesia was clearly a winner. Creating the CWDL self-service Web site was out of the box for the most part; any customization was straightforward. The product is expandable, accessible and has a strong Java API. I give the product 4 out of 5 stars.” – *Arsalan Siddiqui; Technical Analyst, Creative Works*

Measuring Success

How do you know the new approach is working?

“The ROI from our DAM implementation is revenue-generating, productivity-enhancing, and competitively advantageous. We’re helping our sales staff take market share away from our competitors by providing trade customers with a self-serve, no-cost environment to support sales and marketing efforts.” - *Bill Langbehn, Director of Creative Works*

“Gladiator is a start-up brand, but with the advantage of a large company behind it. Having the DAM system infrastructure already available was a real advantage for us. We are expanding our market quickly and consistently, providing customers such as housing contractors and retailers with Gladiator imagery on-demand.” - *Travis Perkins, Brand Manager, Gladiator GarageWorks*

What do your customers think of the new approach?

“We use the CWDL system daily; having it brings enormous value to our workflow and helps us serve Whirlpool in quicker, more innovative ways. I’ve worked with other companies where email is the only vehicle for product, brand, and advertising manager communications. It creates a serial ‘interactions chain’ which is slow, frustrating, and ultimately, counterproductive.” *Matt Jansick, Creative Director, ARS Advertising*

“The ability to create and distribute ‘sets,’ a collection of assets for a particular marketing campaign or product launch, provides a reusable digital package that can be used for multiple deliverables including point of sale materials, literature, and our eCommerce Web site. This saves us a great deal of time and money and ensures that brand identity is in check regardless of the output.” *Becky Ross, Project Coordinator, Whirlpool Brand Marketing*

Whirlpool Corporation Company Background

The corporate Whirlpool brand is synonymous with innovative, trusted, and aesthetically pleasing household appliances. In fact, the level of brand awareness that equates Whirlpool with appliances is enjoyed by only an elite group of manufacturers and their products. Other examples of brands with immediate consumer recognition and as a result, measurable equity, include Kleenex, Coca-Cola, Dell, and Nike.

The phenomenon of brand value doesn't happen overnight; it takes years to build, consistency to sustain, and savvy corporate strategy to enhance and expand. The result, however, is more valuable than some companies realize (Whirlpool most certainly *not* included.) In fact, according to Wharton Professor David Reibstein, "Over the past 50 years there has been a remarkable transition in the determinants of a firm's value. Fifty years ago, nearly 80% of a typical firm's value was made up of tangible assets – for example, its plant, equipment, inventory, land and work in progress. Today, nearly 50% of a firm's value is determined by intangible assets – items that generally don't appear directly on the books and are harder to measure. One of the largest of these assets is the firm's brand or brands."

Building the Corporate Brand

The Whirlpool corporate brand has a history dating back to 1911. The company has steadily expanded its product line, revenues, and global footprint for more than five decades, evident by milestone returns – from \$1 billion in 1968, to \$2 billion by 1978, to \$6 billion by 1989, to the \$13 billion reported in 2004. The corporate mission has also remained focused over time, demonstrated by mantras such as "Unmatched customer loyalty – the core of our strategy" and "Customer passion and lifelong relationships – the focus of our business."

The corporate brand has also been built on a long history of design innovation, a safe and diverse employee environment, customer-centered manufacturing, and a spirit of social responsibility. In fact, the depth of the company's commitment to multiple social efforts is evident by a six-year inclusion of Whirlpool on the "100 Best Corporate Citizens" list published by Business Ethics Magazine. The company boasts an impressive set of accomplishments that foster these commitments:

- The implementation of Operational Excellence, Whirlpool's custom version of the Six Sigma program, improves quality while lowering costs and shortening cycle times. This program helped Whirlpool leverage its global manufacturing experience to save \$175 million in manufacturing costs in its first three years of use.
- Whirlpool's commitment to innovation was recognized in 2002 with a National Design Award for Corporate Achievement from the Smithsonian Institution.
- Whirlpool is a six-time winner of the ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Energy, demonstrating the company's commitment to environmental protection.
- More than 3,500 Whirlpool employees are involved in a five-year, \$25 million commitment to Habitat for Humanity International. The partnership has provided more than 65,000 appliances to Habitat homes built in North America. In addition, Whirlpool has raised over a million dollars to support the fight against breast cancer through the "Cook for the Cure" program, sponsored by KitchenAid.

Over 90 years of history gives Whirlpool an extremely valuable asset: a corporate brand that communicates innovation, consumer-driven research and development, and excellence in design and performance. Injecting these principles into internal and customer-facing

business processes enables the company to invoke a consistent set of emotional responses from consumers including trust, uniqueness, and most important, loyalty.

Establishing a House of Brands

Whirlpool offers a wide range of household appliance products, including washing machines, clothes dryers, refrigerators, freezers, cooking appliances, microwave ovens, dishwashers and a complete range of built-in appliances. Within these product lines, the company has also established a portfolio of brands through innovative product design, targeted marketing, and a spectrum of partnerships with trade customers. This portfolio enables Whirlpool to offer multiple brands with distinct values in the same product category. A prime example is the company's "house of brands" for kitchen appliances:

- **KitchenAid** – an up-market brand serving professional chefs and the “home enthusiast or entertainer.” Characteristics and features for this brand are geared toward thorough processing, precision, and accuracy. Branding for KitchenAid appliances includes taglines such as “innovative products for the well-equipped kitchen,” “more than a mixer,” and “cater to higher expectations.”
- **Whirlpool** – a mass-market brand serving families and in particular, the “active balancer” or “super-mom.” Characteristics and features for this brand are geared toward speed, high capacity, and durability. Branding for Whirlpool appliances includes taglines such as “cook more,” “style and performance unite,” and “Form. Function. Unity.”
- **Roper** – a value brand serving cost-conscious consumers who buy based on price. Characteristics and features for this brand are geared toward simplicity, reliability, and in particular, affordability. Branding for Roper appliances includes taglines such as “sensible solutions for your family” and “simple, sturdy, affordable workhorse appliances.”

Whirlpool's ability to establish multiple consumer-preferred brand positions within the same product line represents a corporate investment in the millions of dollars for research, design, production and marketing. A key success factor has been the creation of emotional links between the corporate brand, individual brands and consumer reaction. The effect has been viral and measurable, demonstrated by continuous growth in the pool of “brand ambassadors” that recommend Whirlpool products, upgrade existing products, and cross-purchase products from other Whirlpool brands.

These brand ambassadors are also a valuable resource when launching new products, as shown by the success of the three-year old Gladiator brand. Offering a complete line of high-end garage appliances based on a tagline of “Best Garage on the Block,” the Gladiator product line automatically benefits from the association with the Whirlpool corporate brand. It can also tap into the equity of the KitchenAid up-market brand for cross-purchases based on similar customer buying patterns and expectations.

Gladiator Cadet, introduced in May 2005 with a “Garage that Makes you Proud” tagline, is targeted toward a broader group of consumer as a cost-effective alternative to the Gladiator up-market brand. This new product line will surely benefit from the equity built into the Whirlpool and Roper brands.

Going Global with the House

According to the Freedonia Group, “World demand for major household appliances (white goods) will reach 367 million units in 2007. The Asia/Pacific, Latin American and Africa/Mideast regions will grow the fastest based on rising urban populations and per

capita incomes.” As a result of a growth strategy initiated in the mid 1980’s to expand its presence outside the U.S. market, Whirlpool is in an enviable position to meet the world-wide demand for household appliances.

A major acquisition in Europe, joint ventures with companies in Mexico and India, and increased ownership in companies in Canada and Brazil represented the first phase of global expansion for the company. The early 1990’s marked Whirlpool’s expansion in Latin America, Asia, and greater presence Europe. By 1995, the company established manufacturing and marketing presence in India, China and the Asia Pacific region. Today, Whirlpool Corporation boasts the number one market positions in North America and Latin America.

Whirlpool’s global operating platform adds benefits as well as complexities to its house of brands. On the one hand, the KitchenAid, Whirlpool, and Roper brands leverage world-wide efficiencies and best practices in product development, engineering, and manufacturing processes. Each brand also benefits from a well-established corporate brand as it enters new geographical segments.

On the other hand, the corporation is well aware that Whirlpool’s “Every Home...Everywhere” mantra must account for the identification and respect of genuine national and regional differences in customer expectations. Hence, individual brand messaging, positioning, and imagery must be consistent without compromising geographical uniqueness.

Given a platform that spans 170 countries across North America, Europe, Latin America, and Asia, this can be a tall order. Hence, Whirlpool’s challenge for the 21st century is to leverage its global operating platform to increase worldwide market penetration while sustaining innovation, brand equity, and competitive advantage across its house of brands. With a foundation of innovative design and development, consistent brand management, and proactive customer relationship management, Whirlpool has established the groundwork it needs to do so.

The Problem: Sustaining Brand Value in a Global Market

Establishing distinct brand identities across multiple product categories has been a critical component of Whirlpool’s market success. Protecting, sustaining, and expanding this investment across a worldwide market is critical to future growth. Success can be a tricky proposition, requiring that individual brands maintain clear differentiation while also leveraging and demonstrating the corporate brand.

Whirlpool required a multi-faceted operational plan to support its global growth strategy, one that would implement leading edge technology and re-structured business processes from the “top down” as well as the “bottom up.” As former Chairman and CEO David R. Whitwam described it, “Our growth strategy required a re-dimensioning, re-focusing of the company; the goal was to ensure products that share common parts and technologies, but offer unique and innovative features and designs that appeal to regional consumer preferences.”

Creating a centralized, authoritative source for brand assets such as logos, product images, and lifestyle photography would serve as a key pillar on the foundation for success. Hence, Whirlpool’s Creative Works (CW) organization embarked on a multi-year effort to design and implement an enterprise-wide DAM infrastructure.

The immediate goal was fairly predictable: to protect product assets through efficient creation, storage, management, and distribution. The underlying goal, however, was more strategic and for some manufacturers, elusive: to treat the Whirlpool brands *themselves* as tangible assets that could be consistently measured, protected, and reinforced across the full

spectrum of customer touchpoints. This objective required more than infrastructure; it mandated a corporate digital domain to support the brand-specific activities of thousands of internal and external CW customers.

Understanding the extent of the Creative Works' mission requires some background about this organization's role and impact within Whirlpool. CW provides project management, creative services and production services in support of all Whirlpool Corporation's brands and corporate functions. Made up of Video, Creative and Publishing, Photo, and Digital Content Services, the organization is an impressive group of thirty-five business and creative professionals who:

- Provide cross-functional analysis and consulting to determine methods and processes for the repurposing of assets and delivery of technological solutions.
- Manage a full-service commercial photography and video production studio.
- Serve a full spectrum of internal and external customers including brand managers, product managers, account managers, eCommerce managers, sales representatives, advertising agencies, trade customers, and retailers.
- Create and manage rich media that serves as input to hundreds of media campaigns for brands and products representing thousands of SKUs.
- Create product content and collateral including sales literature, point of sale (POS) materials, presentation and display materials, interactive electronic media, and printed materials such as flyers, mailers, and handbooks.

As a non-core functional area in terms of revenue, it is often difficult for an organization such as CW to have a bottom-line impact on the corporation. The CW mission to overcome this challenge is to provide "anytime, anywhere, anyway" services to all those who influence brand value through consumer communications and interactions. The group's ability to do this *consistently and precisely* increases brand equity over time, as measured by the consistency, depth, and speed of consumer recognition to Whirlpool products.

The "anytime, anywhere, anyway" mantra translated into a core set of business drivers for the design, implementation, and ongoing improvement of the Creative Works Digital Library (CWDL):

- Improve speed to market for CW deliverables destined for multiple outputs, including collateral such as specification sheets, flyers, posters, and Web content.
- Protect, sustain and expand brand value through the availability and distribution of consistent brand imagery.
- Increase competitive advantage through unrivaled support to trade customers.

The following sections provide details on the Creative Works' criteria for success as related to these business drivers.

The Need: Manage Brands as Assets

"For a brand to be a true brand, it must be consistent. For a global brand to be a true global brand, it must also be consistent, not just in name, but in position and what it offers."

(David Reibstein, *The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. House of Brands Versus Branded House* <http://www.globalagemagazine.com/2005/davidreibstein.asp>)

Establishing a consumer-preferred, recognizable brand is a daunting task for manufacturers with just one product line given today's distributed organizations, competitive markets and cultural diversity. Whirlpool's ability to create a set of unique "true global brands" in one organization is a certainly an impressive achievement. The work hardly ends there, however. Managing corporate and individual brands as tangible assets requires diligence, control, and as Reibstein notes, a comprehensive plan for consistency.

As the portal for brand imagery to all of Whirlpool's revenue-generating departments, the Creative Works organization is in a unique position to drive brand consistency in marketing, advertising, and sales processes. As Jennifer Knapp, Manager of Photo Services explained, "We are the gatekeeper for image quality and brand consistency. In effect, we provide governance on technical standards and need to make sure that all photographed appliances measure to the actual dimensions, colors, and specifications that meet consumer expectations."

Of course, acting as a gatekeeper requires that one has a strong gate. Prior to early 2000, Creative Works had implemented a functional but departmental solution for asset management. Even so, there remained a number of inefficiencies that posed a risk to sustaining and expanding corporate and brand identities:

- Redundant business processes across photo, creative and publishing, and video services with little asset re-use.
- Over-dependence on subject matter experts to find and assemble assets based on telephone, e-mail or fax requests.
- High fulfillment costs due to labor-intensive, manual processes for CD-based asset distribution.
- Incomplete risk management strategies to manage obsolescence and prevent the unauthorized usage of brand assets.

Creative Works' desire to manage brands and imagery as corporate assets led the organization to re-evaluate daily operations in light of these inefficiencies. The result of this self-evaluation was a clear requirement for a corporate DAM framework that would eliminate internal bottlenecks and establish an enterprise-ready infrastructure to better support CW internal and external customers.

Criteria for Success: Speed to Market, Cost Reduction

As an 18-year Whirlpool veteran, Content and Solutions Consultant Gregg Crandall leveraged his business and technical knowledge to champion CWs' DAM strategy. His perspective was critical to establishing the right balance of control, governance, and usability that would pave the way for broad internal and external user adoption. Supported by Director of Creative Works Bill Langbehn as well as key business executives, the plan for a first-phase implementation centered on the following goals:

- Establish a single-source, authoritative repository of digital content to "enable consistent use of imagery per brand regardless of channel or audience."
- Merge corporate and business requirements into functional capabilities that maintain security and control but allow for intuitive, collaborative, and flexible access.
- Implement quality assurance processes to ensure accuracy in image attributes and usage criteria.

- Provide detailed audit trails and reporting mechanisms to understand asset usage per brand and product line, synchronize brand asset availability with product development and launch lifecycles, and enable asset re-use for multiple output channels.

Achieving these goals for the corporate DAM framework would allow CW to eliminate redundancy and inefficiency inside its own organization. More importantly, it would prepare for a new services model that shifted business processes from labor-intensive management and distribution to an on-demand, self-service model for brand asset search and retrieval.

The Need: Protect Brand Value

“Branding is the blend of art and science that manages associations between a brand and memories in the mind of the brand's audience. It involves focusing resources on selected tangible and intangible attributes to differentiate the brand in an attractive, meaningful and compelling way for the targeted audience.”

(Vincent Grimaldi, *The Grimaldi Group, The Fundamentals of Branding*,
http://www.brandchannel.com/features_effect.asp?pf_id=183)

Brand value is the subject of many marketing and business articles. Usually, they contain a compelling discussion of ethereal factors such as emotion, product essence, and customer experience alongside more familiar business terms like earnings, balance sheet, and equity.

Organizations that “get” branding concepts combine business savvy and marketing expertise with psychology and sociology principles to influence consumer preferences and decision-making. Executed with precision and consistency, a branding strategy can dramatically increase the financial value and earnings potential of its product family.

Whirlpool’s ownership of multiple consumer-preferred brands clearly demonstrates that the company “gets it.” The Creative Works focus on developing a comprehensive, brand-driven metadata strategy for the DAM implementation demonstrates that this organization was determined to *protect it*. In other words, establishing the framework for consistency was only a first step toward the vision of an enterprise infrastructure for brand asset management. One of the more significant “next steps” was to unify digital images with the style of its associated brand.

As Jeff Fetting, Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer explained, “The success of our strategy depends on knowing the rational and emotional drivers that build customer loyalty for a brand.” Given that many CW employees boast 10-year tenures with Whirlpool, the group possessed a deep, collective knowledge of these drivers.

Multi-year coordination with brand, account, and sales managers as well as advertising agencies had produced a library of over 17,000 digital images destined for management in the enterprise DAM infrastructure. These images contained distinct characteristics based on the brand and focus of a particular marketing campaign. For example:

- Imagery for the KitchenAid brand included customized cabinets and Corian countertops by high-end manufacturers such as Kraft Maid and DuPont as well components such as cookbooks, professional cutlery and gourmet food items. These characteristics are designed to convey the KitchenAid messaging to the “Home Enthusiast,” one who feels that “cooking is a form of creative expression and that the kitchen is the heart of the home.”
- Imagery for the Whirlpool brand focused on creative treatments and components to demonstrate a home environment that supports busy and active families. These characteristics are designed to convey the Whirlpool messaging to the “Active

Balancer,” one who values appliances that “save time, manage space, and get great results with less effort.”

- Imagery for the Roper brand, Whirlpool’s value brand, included components to demonstrate “sensible solutions that are simple, sturdy, and affordable.”

Creative Works’ desire to capture a historical investment in distinctive brand imagery led the organization to design a comprehensive taxonomy and metadata strategy within the enterprise infrastructure for brand asset management. This design would be critical for the shift to an on-demand, self-service model to better support CW internal and external customers.

Criteria for Success: Brand Consistency

Collaboration is always a key part of any taxonomy and metadata design process. Crandall was well aware of the need to capture a holistic view of image attributes in order to support brand consistency. As he explained, “The taxonomy would be a multi-purpose component by providing a brand-driven internal structure as well as the means to create usable system interfaces for our users.” Hence, CW relied on discussions with brand, account, and sales managers as well as advertising agency requirements for creative treatments to formulate the goals for this architecture:

- Establish the baseline taxonomy according to brand and product category.
- Create a multi-faceted metadata architecture that encompasses:
 - “Factual” attributes to identify brand, SKU, model numbers, and product color.
 - “Aesthetic” attributes to specify image format, resolution, saturation, and special effects such as hue, drop shadows or banner areas.
 - “Emotional” attributes to indicate brand identity factors such as ethnicity, gender, and family type.
 - “Process-specific” attributes to define access rights management and trigger automated notifications for image availability, release criteria, and obsolescence.
- Integrate asset-based usage guidelines to reduce the risk of compromising corporate and brand identity.

Meeting these goals would allow CW to protect brand value by dynamically combining an asset’s “essence” with its more tangible, business-centric characteristics.

The Need: Flexible, Self-Service Access and Distribution

“Building strong trade customer relationships is crucial to building lifelong, loyal customers for our brands.”

Jeff Fettig, Whirlpool Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer

A manufacturer’s external supply chain is as critical to a corporate growth strategy as consumers themselves. Given Whirlpool’s size and global operating platform, the company must treat and manage a broad group of trade partners, retailers, and independent storefronts as an individual customer group with specialized requirements. Creative Works provides direct, essential support to this group through its creative and publishing, photography, and digital content services.

These customers are what Whirlpool calls “brand influencers,” signifying their ability to reinforce and expand brand identity as a result of direct consumer interactions. As Angie

Seger, Marketing Communications Manager for Whirlpool Brand Marketing explained, “We need to consistently build and expand the confidence of our trade customers in the longevity, reliability, and market recognition of our brands; if they don’t understand and communicate brand messaging, they don’t pass it on to consumers.”

Certainly, a strong, well-informed, and coordinated supply chain can deliver a significant competitive advantage for a product line, especially when the chain thinks and acts as an extension of the manufacturer. However, an inability to obtain product information can quickly erode the loyalty and patience of this customer group. As Lisa Garrison, a CW trade customer and Merchandise Analyst for Canada’s Future Shop explained, “Not having immediate access to the right image for weekly flyer and newspaper advertising could force us to pull the offer.” (Future Shop is one of two Best Buy Canada brands of large, broad-based consumer electronics stores.)

An inability to adapt and personalize brand imagery can also disintegrate what was once a healthy trade customer relationship. Certainly corporate marketing campaigns and usage guidelines for brand imagery govern the flavor of supply chain advertising. As in product design and development, however, a global operating platform requires features, and in turn messaging, that appeals to regional consumer preferences.

Creative Works’ desire to provide trade customers with the flexibility to advertise according to the needs of their market segment, geographic location, and output channel (e.g., print, Web, TV, etc.) led the organization to expand the focus on ease-of-use for the DAM implementation. This focus would be a natural extension of the investment in an enterprise-ready infrastructure and a comprehensive metadata design. It would also test CWs’ ability to deliver the right balance of control, governance, and usability to support the “anytime, anywhere, anyway” services mission.

Criteria for Success: Customer Satisfaction, Competitive Advantage

Usability matters. Its ability to drive user adoption in all content technology implementations cannot be understated. For Whirlpool, success literally depended on it, given the goal for an on-demand, self-service model for asset retrieval and distribution. Determined to equate self-service with ease-of use, the CW team defined the following user-centric goals for the design, implementation, and ongoing improvement of the Creative Works Digital Library (CWDL):

- Create a library-oriented role within CW to manage and consistently expand the metadata architecture.
- Develop user access roles based on diverse security, process, and search requirements. For example:
 - Casual users such as corporate executives or business unit managers would need cross-brand access. A typical asset search would be based on generic, factual metadata with specific emotional attributes, e.g., “family, KitchenAid mixer.”
 - External users such as trade customers, retailers, and advertising agencies would need brand-specific access. A typical asset search would be based on specific factual metadata such as SKU or model number with specific emotional attributes, e.g., “46462, Asian Mother, Kenmore HE2, electric dryer.”
 - Brand and account managers would need brand-specific access as well as the ability to quickly set up and grant access to external users.

- CW users from creative, photography and video services would need management capabilities as well as cross-brand access and retrieval based on specific factual, emotional, and aesthetic metadata.
- Develop applications to support on-demand collateral development according to brand and target market.

Meeting these goals would allow CW to support different use cases according to customer type, setting the stage for broad internal and external user adoption. As Crandall noted, this approach would be the “keys to the kingdom” in terms of demonstrating customer satisfaction and in turn, increasing Whirlpool’s competitive advantage.

Solution Components

Product Components and Architecture

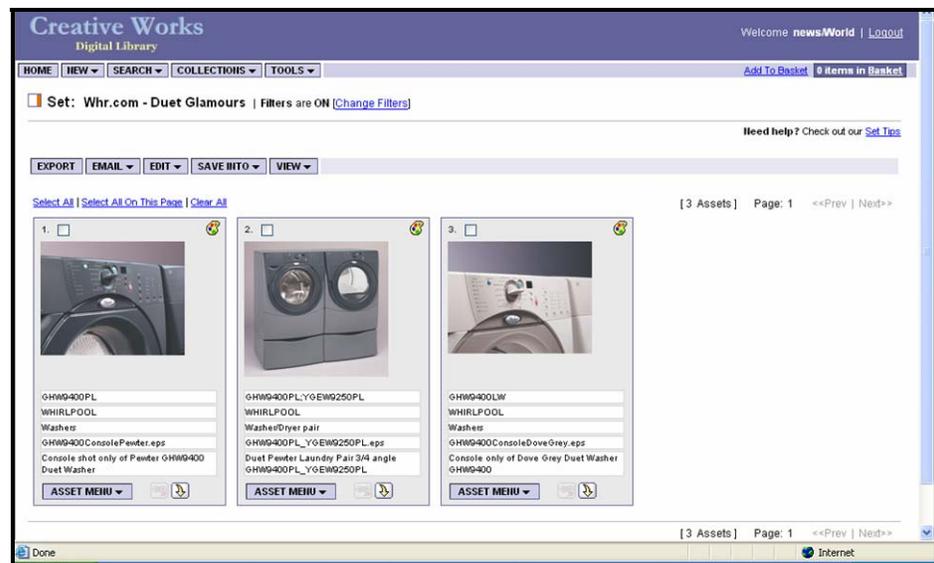
Whirlpool’s Creative Works organization chose Artesia Digital Media, a Division of Open Text to implement its brand asset management strategy. Artesia prides itself on providing “singular management of digital content through an intuitive, Web-based front-end interface based on an enterprise-class back-end architecture.”

CWs’ vision for the CWDL clearly required Artesia’s expertise, given the mission to create an authoritative repository of brand assets that provided on-demand access for a range of casual to technical users inside and outside the organization. Artesia’s leadership position, award-winning solution, and proven brand asset management implementations assured Crandall that Artesia DAM could provide the balance of control, governance, and usability he was seeking.

CW utilizes Artesia DAM to provide 5,000 internal and external customers with:

- An enterprise DAM infrastructure based on a Web application server with back-end database and streaming servers.
- A multi-faceted metadata architecture that supports factual, emotional, aesthetic, and process-specific asset attributes.
- A secure model for user access based on “organization” (the type of internal or external user,) “role” (the amount of functionality required,) and named individual.
- A digital library that has grown to over 23,000 CWDL assets, including high-quality, high-resolution 100+ MB images
- A Web-based, intuitive interface for asset search and retrieval.
- Weekly, automated transfer of new brand assets to internal departments based on identified criteria.
- “Image-enabled” applications that provide integrated access to brand asset library.

The following graphics illustrate the CWDL interfaces.



Best Practices and Organization Changes

The evolution of CWs' on-demand, self-service business model is undoubtedly the most visible example of DAM-inspired organizational change. The impact is both broad and significant, helping to define new ways for CW to serve its customers while also improving existing processes.

Behind the scenes, CWs' creation of the Digital Content Coordinator role represents an important investment in a widely-acknowledged best practice for DAM implementations. Metadata creation and management is critical to the accessibility and categorization of brand assets. Although a portion of the CWDL metadata architecture is fed by Whirlpool's Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) system, the majority of emotional attributes that

aptly convey brand essence is a necessary, human-driven function. In essence, the Digital Content Coordinator's contribution toward providing a usable, brand-specific DAM environment is invaluable.

The CW investment in process-specific metadata is equally important. CW provides continuing support to sales managers by tagging obsolete products and restricting internal and external access according to time-driven criteria. Once these product images are deemed obsolete, only administrative personnel can view and retrieve them. This metadata-driven process also supports records retention policies that require product photography storage for a 7-year period.

Results

Speed to Market, Cost Reductions

According to research by GISTICS, an independent research organization, the absence of a DAM system forces the typical user to spend 2.9 minutes searching for a single file. Unfortunately, the user fails to find the desired item 39% of the time. The Creative Works organization manually retrieved and distributed approximately 3,000 images per year prior to the DAM implementation.

Based on this research, Whirlpool can estimate a savings of at least 145 labor hours per year as a result of automated search and retrieval. As Digital Content Coordinator Tanyia Coleman noted, "The DAM system makes it easier to meet and exceed customer expectations faster than ever before. I spend 50% less time on phone-based customer support, which lets me manage images rather than problems."

In terms of hard cost savings related to other manual processes, Crandall estimates that Whirlpool saves "in excess of \$400,000 USD per year as a result of our digital asset management strategy." Specific examples of this estimate include the following:

- According to Debbie Prior, Assistant Brand Manager for Whirlpool Canada, "The CD-based fulfillment process has ceased to exist, saving us countless dollars in labor and materials costs." Prior's comment reflects the effect of a corporate-wide elimination of manual fulfillment. Based on a CW-derived cost of \$50 per response, self-service image retrieval saves Whirlpool at least \$150,000 USD per year.
- CWDL usage has grown significantly in just two years and currently boasts 5,000 internal and external users. CW-designed reports show 19,000 image downloads during Year 1 and an increase to 48,000 downloads during Year 2. These statistics demonstrate considerable cost avoidance savings given the prior \$50 per response cost. From Crandall's perspective, "These numbers would not have been achieved or sustained in an analog environment; this is the real deliverable of the DAM system."
- Cost avoidance savings can also be extrapolated from increased usage and asset re-use. For example, in-house photography shoots can cost upwards of \$1,500 USD per product. New set design can cost between \$40-50,000 USD. Proving the recovery of these costs was difficult to impossible before the DAM implementation. Documented asset re-use (e.g., one KitchenAid image was used 33 times between January and April 2004,) enables a more formal accounting of cost recovery as well as demonstrated avoidance of re-creation costs.
- The centralized repository brings in-house ownership and control of product shots, eliminating the cost of advertising agency billings for image creation, storage and retrieval. According to Linda Ludwig, Manager of Creative and Publishing Services, "It was extremely painful to gather images from a multitude of advertising agencies. In

the early nineties it was not uncommon to have the same product shot multiple times by multiple agencies due to a lack of coordination and collaboration.”

Today, CWDL helps brand and marketing managers speed the execution of new product launches. Whirlpool’s marketing and advertising partners also value CWDL’s speed to market advantages. As Matt Jansick, ARS Advertising Creative Director explained, “Whirlpool relies on us for speed and quality. If we don’t have access to ‘content in the moment,’ we become the bottleneck. CWDL contributes to our ability to consistently exceed Whirlpool expectations.”

Karen Hodgson, Manager of the Art Department at the Marcom Group agreed, noting that “Working with the Whirlpool CWDL lets me easily access images on-demand, compressing our process timeframes from days or weeks down to minutes.”

Brand Value Protection

As discussed earlier, consistency in marketing and advertising is a critical factor toward protecting brand identity and value. The CWDL repository contains product shots that represent over 13,000 SKUs across the entire Whirlpool house of brands. Ensuring consistent imagery usage per brand regardless of channel or audience would be impossible without CWs’ DAM infrastructure, metadata architecture, and usability-driven adoption strategy.

Becky Ross, a Project Coordinator for Whirlpool Brand Marketing, uses Artesia DAM functionality to save and distribute groups of images related to a specific deliverable or marketing campaign. These “reusable digital packages” then serve as a single source of assets destined for multiple deliverables such as POS materials, literature, and the Whirlpool eCommerce Web site. Ross notes, “This ensures that brand identity is in check regardless of the output; I also have confidence that the aesthetic attributes are consistent with the actual product – images have the same hue, same accents, white looks white, and biscuit looks biscuit.”

As the “gatekeeper for image quality and brand consistency,” Creative Services also uses CWDL to centrally manage documentation on usage criteria. By linking assets to specific usage requirements, CW increases its commitment to a corporate governance strategy and mitigates the risk of improper use.

Brand identity and hence, value, would be jeopardized without these types of controlled protection. Problems undoubtedly arise from inconsistent advertising and in some cases, have legal ramifications. As Director of Creative Works Bill Langbehn noted, “Irritating our trade customers or confusing our consumers is not an option for a leader in the industry.”



Competitive Advantage

CWDL continues to have a positive impact on customer relationship management (CRM) initiatives for trade customers, retailers and independent storefront owners. Corporate departments such as the Customer Loyalty Center and Creative and Publishing Services view CWDL as an on-demand environment, “accessible 24/7.” This puts these areas in a much better position to provide trade customers with branded imagery according to their market and geographic needs. It also allows departments to offer “image-enabled”

applications that provide external customers with integrated access to the brand asset library. A prime example of the impact of self-service applications that rely on the DAM repository for image retrieval include:

- The “Merchandising Guide,” a template-driven collateral piece for home building contractors that can be customized as needed. According to Ludwig, “Our process lets us create the look and feel of an entire piece once and share it many times, giving selected trade customers permission to customize it.”
- The “eBRANDkit Trade Merchandiser,” a Web-based merchandising tool that provides self-service creation of POS materials, product specification sheets, and print advertising to trade customers and buying group representatives.



eBRANDkit™ Trade Merchandiser

A well-serviced external supply chain increases Whirlpool’s ability to sustain its market leadership position and as a result, protect and expand competitive advantage.

A Supplier’s Voice: Artesia Digital Media, a Division of Open Text

Whirlpool’s selection of the Artesia DAM solution brought two marketing and brand management experts together, combining Artesia’s implementation expertise with Whirlpool’s visionary strategy to protect and extend the value of their digital content. The rigor and approach Whirlpool took in identifying requirements, system expectations, and an implementation plan for its Content Works Digital Library (CWDL) serves as a model for other companies seeking to better manage, distribute, and maximize digital marketing content on a global level.

In addition to Artesia’s customer list and significant experience, there were four key functional aspects of the Artesia DAM solution that resonated with Whirlpool during the selection process:

1. Enterprise framework
2. Metadata management
3. Security
4. Usability

Artesia’s architectural approach and open APIs aligned with Whirlpool’s mission to streamline information exchange with global distribution partners and allow for greater self sufficiency. This enabled world-wide access to a self-service distribution framework powered by cohesive integration between Artesia DAM and Whirlpool’s portal system. The enterprise nature of the Artesia DAM architecture allows Whirlpool to extend the solution to large numbers of users without undermining system performance. Self-service functionality such as powerful Transformers compliment this architecture by enabling users to determine the format of selected content based on their particular needs.

Artesia has long been an innovator in the area of metadata management. The Artesia DAM solution allows customers to easily configure a metadata model to reflect precise business needs. Customers can also dynamically retrieve asset metadata from external sources to align enterprise systems. For Whirlpool, the ability to define business-specific vocabularies and taxonomies played a critical role in the design of CWDL. Based on Artesia’s deep customer experience, combining these types of metadata capabilities is what allows

companies to gain the greatest value from digital content. The Whirlpool implementation provides a real world demonstration of the impact.

Enterprise-wide security was also an important factor in Whirlpool's selection of Artesia. The Artesia DAM security model offers companies a highly scalable, flexible, and sophisticated security model that is also easy to administer. Since the CWDL serves a broad range of worldwide users, Whirlpool also required software application security that reflects the structure and business process requirements of the entire user base. Artesia's security features address these requirements by allowing individual groups, departments, and business units to control functional access to and views into personalized collections of digital content assets.

The Whirlpool implementation also demonstrates that usability is critical to ensuring user satisfaction and adoption. Artesia's implementation expertise has shown that creative professionals in particular are keenly sensitive to usability as it relates to their particular workflows. For this reason, Artesia invests heavily in conducting ongoing comprehensive usability studies and gathering feedback from our customer base. This investment has produced a leading DAM solution that provides a highly intuitive product interface with the flexibility required for creative professionals to work in the manner they are accustomed to.

Artesia Digital Media is a Division of the Open Text Corporation, one of the largest providers of ECM solutions. Artesia is dedicated to providing innovative solutions for creative professionals and consumers of digital media throughout the marketing supply chain. Open Text and its Digital Media Division understand that a viable ECM solution built for today's content driven companies must address and handle the unique complexities associated with such varied content types as audio, video, photography, and graphics as well as documents.

Artesia and Open Text are extremely pleased to count a premier brand like Whirlpool amongst our customers. We look forward to continuing to partner with Whirlpool as they evolve and expand their marketing content and digital media needs in new and innovative ways.

Conclusions

When the Gilbane team evaluates a potential case study for our Content Technology Works initiative, we specifically look for elements of the deployment that are useful lessons for other adopters of content technologies. We think that the following universal factors are key to the success that Whirlpool has achieved thus far.

- **All roads to revenue lead to the customer.** Like most creative organizations, the CW mission is focused on support and services as opposed to "front-line" revenue generation. Though their impact on revenue is indirect, they understand that the creation, management and distribution of brand assets is intrinsic to successful customer relationship, product lifecycle, and sales management programs. Interweaving content technologies and DAM principles across these programs increases the visibility of the organization and provides direct evidence of the value of product content.
- **Protecting and expanding brand value requires an enterprise approach to digital asset management.** CWDL design is based on the needs of the entire information supply chain, in which all users must be accounted for and supported appropriately. The underlying technology architecture is flexible enough to support all stakeholders, while also delivering the security, scalability, and extensibility required for an enterprise deployment.

- **Brand asset management encompasses more than technology.** Certainly, Creative Works choice of an enterprise solution was critical to the creation of an on-demand, self-service DAM environment. Equally significant, however, is the organization's ongoing commitment to process re-engineering in support of internal and trade customer requirements. Re-thinking "how the work gets done" incorporates input from all stakeholders, demonstrating that strategic collaborative brainstorming produces tangible results.
- **Usability drives broad adoption and customer satisfaction.** CW continues to make a substantial and consistent investment in establishing the right balance of control, governance, and usability for CWDL. Crandall's view that this balance represents the "keys to the kingdom" could not be more accurate.

The efforts within Whirlpool and its Creative Services organization toward global brand management are admirable. Clearly, their strategy is positively impacting corporate goals for speed to market and brand consistency, inevitably resulting in an increased competitive advantage for this manufacturer. *The Gilbane Report* thanks Whirlpool and its employees for sharing their story.

About Content Technology Works

Content Technology Works (CTW) is an industry initiative to develop and share content technology best practices and success stories. CTW is administered by *The Gilbane Report*, a trusted source of high-quality information on content technologies.

Typically, the kind of valuable information included in CTW case studies is only available for purchase. CTW content is different because CTW partners subsidize the program to ensure that this information is free. Partners want to push as many best practices to as many organizations as possible with the expected result being an overall acceleration of content technology adoption. For more information on the CTW program, visit www.gilbane.com/technology_works.html.

Since the CTW program was first conceived in 2003, we have sought out suppliers who are passionate about and committed to content technology as a game-changing force in the markets that they serve. Our CTW partners know that public, open and unfettered access to successful enterprise deployments, regardless of the technology mix, only benefit the commercial aspirations of organizations that offer material, dependable and predictable value. *The Gilbane Report* team wishes to thank these diverse and often competing organizations for their generous support and sponsorship of the development, promotion and distribution of CTW material. They are: [Software AG](#) (TECdax:SOW), [Sun Microsystems](#) (NASDAQ:SUNW), [Artesia Digital Media](#), a Division of Open Text, [Astoria Software](#), [ClearStory Systems](#) (OTCBB:INSS), [Context Media](#), [Convera](#) (NASDAQ:CNVR), [IBM](#) (NYSE:IBM), [Idiom](#), [Mark Logic](#), [Open Text Corporation](#) (NASDAQ:OTEX), [SDL International](#) (London Stock Exchange:SDL), [Vasont Systems](#), [Vignette](#) (NASDAQ:VGN), [WebSideStory](#) (NASDAQ:WSSI).

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