HOME FURNISHING
NORDIC

php
php

PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FOR THE BIG NORDIC FURNITURE RETAILER

Before partnering with Forbytes, Home Furnishing Nordic used an on-premise solution for stock management. The software was quite limited in functionality and slowed down the growth of the entire business. When the client realized this, they came to Forbytes with the idea of building a custom product information management (PIM) system. Just in 6 weeks, we created the first need-tailored PIM system prototype that could be used by the company to grow the number of goods, increase efficiency, and scale.

ABOUT HOME FURNISHING NORDIC

Home Furnishing Nordic (HFN) is a part of the rapidly growing family of online and physical furniture stores with a presence in most European countries. It's one of the largest online retailers of furniture and interior design in the Nordic region. HFN holds many online stores, each targeted at a particular market and country. Using custom PIM, the client manages more than 1.5 million products and plans to scale up and grow this number to 3 million.

Client:	Location	Product type:	Team composition:
Home Furnishing Nordic	Sweden	Custom PIM System	1 Project Manager, 1 Business Analyst, 3 QA Engineers, 1 Tech Lead, 2 Front-End Engineers, 5 Back-End Engineers, 1 UI/UX Designer

- **Online and physical furniture retailer since 2009**
- **One of the two segments of Byghemma Group**
- **Operates in Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark**

- **Holds multiple online stores**
- **$535.4 million yearly revenue**
- **Offers more than 300 000 products**

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The scope of this project involved building an all-encompassing product information management system. It was aimed to support all of the client stores and ease managers' work with assortment. The central functionality of PIM includes product, category, and campaign management features. By using this, HFN can:

- Check the list of products, group them into campaigns according to season, supplier, or manufacturer;

- Classify products based on master categories (used by managers to manage assortment) or public categories (those are client-side; they ease website navigation for a user and enhance SEO);

- Add product properties (properties create logic for product categorization) and manage product prices.

Another important aspect of the PIM system functionality is data management. For effective data management, our team built the functions of import and export. HFN employees use the PIM to add data to the system and update assortment in big volumes. To add new product data to the system, managers have to import the file with data. The system will process it and update the assortment or product details. In case file errors are detected, the system notifies an employee and displays the list of errors to be fixed for successful data processing. Similarly, the HFN team can export files with data by filtering products by properties and compiling a customized product list.

A history log is also a part of PIM software functionality. In the PIM system we built for HFN, they have the chance to check all the changes introduced at a certain time and by a certain user. Having this functionality helps to:

☐ Track activity in the PIM system and make the manager's work more consistent. They can check how their team deals with the assigned tasks in the system.

☐ Prevent errors. Having a history log in front of their eyes prevents managers from doing the same task twice. Also, if some mistakes happen, they can easily check them and remove the changes.

THEIR CHALLENGES

OUR SOLUTIONS

One of the goals of HFN was to get product information management software capable of processing growing volumes of data. As the client planned to double the number of products managed in the PIM, the software had to have no limits in terms of data management.

1 Forbytes built a PIM system that enables the client to grow and scale. As of now, nearly 1.5 million products are managed using a single solution. As the client plans to grow this number, we provide maintenance services to optimize the PIM system and keep it up-to-date.

The client expected the solution to cover both online and offline store management. Managing all stores under one roof would save them resources and reduce effort.

2 Our team developed a PIM solution that unites managing all client stores in one centralized hub. Our client, who has separate branches and websites in several different countries, can access and manage prices, stock availability, product descriptions, translations, etc. for all the branches within a single interface

Home Furnishing Nordic aimed to decrease the volume of manual work associated with product management and eliminate human errors that lead to supply chain discrepancies.

3 The PIM solution automated many internal processes related to product management that previously required manual work. It increased business efficiency and eliminated errors that were caused by the human factor. In addition, we implemented data validation features that regularly perform automatic checks.bsite.

They needed a team that can support the solution and make changes or adjustments when necessary. The client wanted to make decisions on the project's growth based on what they learn from the daily use of PIM.

4

We have dedicated a separate team to the PIM project which includes developers, quality assurance engineers, UI/UX designers, and business analysts. The team makes adjustments and adds new features as soon as they are needed based on feedback from our client's employees who use the system.website.

HOW WE ADD VALUE

01. ADVANCED FILTERING

Before our team introduced advanced filtering, the HFN managers had to undergo a hard way. To find a particular category of products, they needed to export all data on products in the form of a file and using Excel format and formulas find the needed products manually in the list. Then, they introduced changes in this file and uploaded it back to the PIM system. This process took much time, effort, and hardware capacities. Downloading files that contain more than 1.5 million products was a challenging task even for powerful computers. The function of advanced search and filtering was a real game-changer for HFN. Now, the team can use basic and advanced filters to compose a custom dataset based on certain product properties, attributes, categories, etc. The custom list is easy to download and takes much less time to edit and upload back to the system.

02. EASIER PRICE MANAGEMENT

Our software product development team automated price management for Home Furnishing Nordic. Before we introduced this functionality, prices were updated manually. A supplier or manufacturer sent the file with price updates to the HFM team. The team had to introduce the changes manually. Now, it's an automated function. The supplier sends the file with price changes. This file is processed by the service that transforms it into the readable format for PIM. Then, the file is automatically added to our PIM system, data is extracted, and prices are updated with no effort from the HFN team. Such a functionality prevents errors in price management and reduces the time needed for manual calculations and data updates.

03. ENHANCED SEO AND MARKETING

The function of public categories is useful not only for user navigation on the website. Managing public categories in the PIM system contributes to better website optimization for search engines. For example, the HFN manager creates a public category of "Black sofas" and adds products to this category. Google can index this category as a website page. Whenever users google "Black sofas," there's a high chance for the client website to end up in the search result and find a new audience.

04. OPPORTUNITY TO SCALE

One of the goals of using PIM by the client was to get new opportunities to scale. When the ecommerce business is at the start, it has a smaller product assortment that is easy to manage and track. But as soon as the business grows, the assortment grows in variety. The PIM system for HFN includes the assortment from the client websites, manufacturers, and suppliers. All these data need to be structured in a certain way to help managers expand business offers. A powerful product information management system unites the work of different departments across the supply chain. User-friendly management functionality helps to keep the assortment list consistent even when the number of products grows.

FUTURE COOPERATION

The PIM system helps Home Furnishing Nordic to scale with no headache for managers and other employees. We have access to the latest feedback from people who use the solution and make timely adjustments or changes if needed. As their business grows, the number of goods also grows. We plan to introduce the function of archiving data that is not in use. This will help to preserve statistical consistency and reduce the load on the system. PIM will get more performant and effective.

Also, one of our nearest goals is to introduce the product completeness rate. It will automatically calculate the rate at which a product is ready to sell and be displayed to a user. The product completeness rate will be defined by the volume and quality of data included in each item. Finally, we are going to make the import and export functions more advanced. They will involve the opportunity to download or upload custom datasets based on public and master categories, product properties, and campaigns.