



Providing better DIY shopping experiences: Hubo Unifies Sales Channels, Expanding into a True Marketplace



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Marc Henkens
E-Commerce Manager
Hubo

Goals

Become Belgium's DIY market leader by offering a wider selection of products and expanding into a much larger marketplace

Exchange product data with suppliers in real time via data pools, according to the standards defined by Global Standards One (GS1)

Onboard new products and suppliers faster and keep product information current with less manual effort

Solution

Deploy Informatica MDM – Product 360 with assistance from Parsionate, an Elite Informatica Partner, and Informatica Professional Services

Use Informatica MDM – Product 360 GDSN Accelerator to easily receive the latest product information from suppliers via the GDSN

Enable suppliers to upload and edit their product information at any time using the Informatica MDM – Product 360 Supplier Self-Service Portal

Results

Helps Hubo scale from 50,000 to a projected 1 million product SKUs in five years and edit product data en masse to adapt quickly to new markets

Connects suppliers via data pools, enabling the company to become the first DIY retailer in Belgium to connect to GS1

Onboards new products and suppliers 10x faster

Business Requirements:

- Fast time-to-market for GS1 connection
- Easy-to-use interface for Hubo employees
- Embedded self-service portal for suppliers

About Hubo

Founded in 1992, Hubo is a Belgian hardware store chain with more than 150 stores throughout the country. Hubo focuses on the do-it-yourself (DIY) market, offering an extensive range of high-quality brands.

Home improvements and projects are often more satisfying and less expensive if one takes a do-it-yourself approach. With the abundance of parts, knowledge, and instructional videos available online, it's easier than ever for consumers to be self-sufficient. Not surprisingly, the multi-billion-dollar global DIY market has exploded, with consumers focusing on building materials, home furnishings, and lighting resources to achieve their home design goals.

In Belgium, Hubo offers hardware and supplies for do-it-yourselfers ranging from the occasional hobbyist to the ambitious and passionate self-starter. Hubo has worked hard to pioneer the DIY concept through its network of retail stores, offering a wide product range and good value. Hubo customers enjoy frequent promotional offers and can make use of numerous other benefits with the Hubo Bonus Card.

Hubo is the second-largest DIY retailer in Belgium, with ambitions to become the market leader both online and offline. To achieve this goal, Hubo needed to dramatically increase the number of products available in its webshop and provide detailed content and digital assets for each product without relying on manual data entry and editing. It needed a product information management system (PIM) that would be scalable and easy to use, helping Hubo expand from a webshop with 50,000 stock keeping units (SKUs) to a marketplace that could have 1 million SKUs within five years.

Additionally, Hubo needed a PIM system that could exchange product information via GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network® (GDSN®), a network of interoperable data pools enabling collaborating suppliers and retailers to securely synchronize master data based on standards set by nonprofit organization GS1. The goal is to enable accurate, real-time data sharing and product updates among trading partners, providing a common business language to help processes flow smoothly. Local DIY retailers agreed to adopt GS1 for processing all product data from suppliers, including logistic and commercial data as well as product images.

"Our previous PIM solution wasn't capable of mass-editing products, nor could it handle the high number of products that we need to manage," says Marc Henkens, E-Commerce Manager at Hubo. "It also couldn't support GS1 GDSN data pools, which we needed to meet our business obligations to other DIY retailers and our suppliers here in Benelux."

A scalable webshop, synchronized with suppliers

After investigating various PIM systems and master data management (MDM) platforms, Hubo chose Informatica MDM – Product 360 for its MDM initiative. Hubo based the decision on the solution's scalability, ease of use for employees and suppliers, and Informatica's commitment to GS1 standards. Informatica is a 1WorldSync certified solution partner and a partner of GS1, allowing customers to easily share product data via GDSN using the Informatica GDSN Accelerator. Seamlessly embedded with Informatica MDM – Product 360, Informatica GDSN Accelerator allows Hubo to exchange product information with suppliers via the GDSN, without ever leaving the Informatica MDM – Product 360 interface.





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“The Informatica MDM – Product 360 GDSN Accelerator makes it easy to synchronize product information with our suppliers through data pools,” says Niels Derison, IT Project Leader at Hubo.

Suppliers now upload their commercial data, logistical data, and product images via the standardized GS1 interface and use the Informatica MDM – Product 360 Supplier Self-Service Portal to add additional data attributes such as long-tail prices for items sold only online. Data is put into a separate supplier catalog within Informatica MDM – Product 360, which suppliers can access via the self-service portal. Afterwards, the data is merged into the master catalog for further approval and enrichment.

Logistical and commercial data, long-tail prices, and product descriptions and images from suppliers flow from Informatica MDM – Product 360 into Hubo’s webshop, leveraging the solution’s digital asset management capabilities for image processing and resizing. For short-tail items (sold both online and in stores), Hubo’s purchasing team defines the selling price within the company’s ERP system and sends it to the webshop.

Informatica MDM – Product 360 touches the entire Hubo organization, from IT to sales and purchasing, requiring employees to adjust their mindset about the lifecycle and management of product data. Previously, Hubo used its ERP system as the master; however, this approach failed to create a 360-degree view of products because the system was not designed to handle commercial attributes and digital asset management. The ERP system must now act as a dependent system in some cases, and all applications that interface with ERP also need to interface with Informatica MDM – Product 360.

“Our Informatica MDM – Product 360 deployment was made easier with expert assistance from Parsionate and Informatica Professional Services, with their deep knowledge of the system and good working relationship,” says Henkens. “Together, they streamlined our project implementation.”

Faster onboarding of new suppliers and products

With Informatica MDM – Product 360, Hubo’s product data is now complete and consistent across the company, and the speed to onboard new suppliers and products has increased due to a more efficient process from start to finish. Product 360 also allows Hubo to edit product attributes en masse instead of individually, allowing the company to adapt quickly to new markets. Instead of onboarding 20,000 new products a year, Hubo can onboard 200,000, putting the company on track to meet its goal of 1 million product SKUs in five years.

“With Informatica MDM – Product 360, onboarding new products became an automated quality assurance process instead of us manually having to gather and enter the data ourselves,” says Henkens. “We can get new products online 10x faster, increasing our product assortment and diversity. In our webshop, we will have even more specialty items available, increasing the range of our product assortment so that we can serve more DIY niche markets.”



Inside The Solution:

- Informatica MDM – Product 360
- Informatica GDSN Accelerator for MDM – Product 360

Providing better DIY shopping experiences

By quickly adopting GS1 standards, Hubo is demonstrating its commitment to DIY customers and suppliers alike. Onboarding new suppliers will become even easier in the future as GS1 becomes more ubiquitous in Belgium.

“We had close partnerships with our suppliers before, but they are even happier now because we are using Informatica MDM – Product 360 to accelerate our adoption of GS1 standards,” says Henkens. “Hubo was the first DIY retailer in Belgium to connect to GS1 to share product data with suppliers, so our Product 360 initiative was a big success.”

Once all local DIY retailers in Belgium migrate to the GS1 data model, every retailer will get the same product data, meaning that the data itself will no longer be a differentiator. Instead, retailers will have to differentiate themselves on product selection and speed of product onboarding. With Informatica MDM – Product 360, Hubo can easily fulfill DIY customers’ demands for relevant, trusted, and rich product information, helping it provide more informed and engaging shopping experiences.

“By helping us offer a larger selection of products online, Informatica MDM – Product 360 is enabling Hubo to become top of mind for Belgian customers who have a DIY job to do at home,” says Henkens. “With Informatica, our planned expansion into a true marketplace will be much easier.”

