

The complete guide to **DAM**

Everything you
need to know about
Digital Asset Management

Marvia

Introduction

Are you having trouble finding the files you need? Frustrated that you don't know what they are named, what folder they are in, or even in what system? Are there different versions of files, photo's or logos scattered across the company? If this sounds familiar, you've come to the right place.

Nowadays, your brand has to deal with a faster-growing demand for content than ever before. Digital assets are needed and used everywhere within the company, not only in marketing. This growing demand has also arisen due to the increasing importance of a consistent corporate identity across all channels, teams, offices, partners, and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, this growing demand for content within the brand identity has taken up an increasing amount of marketers time, distracting them from strategic creative work. According to a [Workfront research](#), marketers spend only 19% of their time on their primary tasks. The other time goes to activities like requests for custom-made content for colleagues, keeping assets organized, up-to-date, and keeping everyone involved with the brand informed.



Maybe your brand already uses a cloud-based media library, which is an excellent first step compared to offline media libraries. However, it's probably still a labyrinth of folders and a collection of outdated files. Not to mention the outdated files that are saved in private libraries. This asset chaos is not only time-consuming, but it can cause inconsistency and eventually harm your brand.

If you're tired of wasting time searching for brand assets and being the brand identity police, a DAM might be the right solution for your digital assets, content distribution and brand consistency. The main question is; is a DAM suitable for your company, and what do you have to consider when choosing a DAM?

In this guide, we will help you answer these questions by learning you more about:

- **What DAM is**
- **The benefits of DAM**
- **DAM basics and features**
- **The steps when choosing a DAM**
- **The steps when implementing a DAM**

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What is DAM?

What is Digital Asset Management?

Digital Asset Management (DAM) is a cloud-based system that enables organizations to easily store, organize, find, and share digital assets.

DAM is a comprehensive media library system that offers a solution for companies that deal with many digital assets and struggle with organizing them, keeping them up-to-date, and giving everyone involved with the brand controlled access to these files.

However, a DAM is more than just a media library; it's the home for brand materials. DAM systems automate the file organization system, which empowers brands and their teams and partners to use the right materials. By offering a **structured and user-friendly folder hierarchy**, a DAM system eases the process of navigating through assets..

To understand what a DAM system does, it is crucial to understand the difference between files and assets first. Although used interchangeably, brand assets and files are two different things. Files can become brand assets, but brand assets are more than just files. Files can only become brand assets when metadata is added, making it searchable.

Besides that, assets are **scalable** and available for **multiple versions**. Take logos, for example: often available in various sizes, formats, and colors. This is where a DAM distinguishes it from other solutions; DAMs are designed for digital assets, where media libraries and online cloud storages are for file storing.

Who needs DAM?

The answer to this question is simple: any company or organization that needs to organize brand assets.

Although DAMs were primarily designed for and mainly used by marketers, we see a growing demand for company-wide used DAMs over different departments, teams, locations, stores or branches.

DAMs are not only helpful for companies who need their brand to be consistent within the company and share assets with direct colleagues, but also for companies who have external parties or stakeholders working with their brand, for example, resellers and partners.

The industries working with DAM

Below you find an overview of industries that use DAM systems frequently.



Retail & Consumer Brands



Food & Beverage



Healthcare



Leisure, Travel & Tourism



Sports



Education



Automotive



Charities and Non-profit



Manufacturing



Political organizations

Do I really need DAM?

Maybe you're already using another file storage solution and you're wondering what the added value of a DAM is. Let's take a look at the exact difference in features between shared drives, online cloud storage and DAMs.

	Shared drives	Online cloud storage (Dropbox etc.)	Digital Asset Management
File storage	✓	✓	✓
Folder structure	✓	✓	✓
File preview	Basic	Basic	Advanced
Search functionality	Basic	Basic	Advanced
Permission settings		Basic	Advanced
Sharing		Basic	Advanced
Integrations			✓
File conversion			✓
File editing			✓
Analytics			✓
Version control			✓
Workflows			✓

DAM Benefits

What are the benefits of DAM?

Time and cost saving

Because it's possible to determine the folder structure and add meta-tags to files yourself, your employees will find the files they are looking for in no time. DAMs are web-based, so you can log in on any device and get access to all materials. Because assets are found much faster, you decrease the time-to-market and save money.

Ensure brand consistency

With DAM, you can manage all brand files from one central point. Because you can determine which files are shown and who has access, employees will never use outdated or incorrect files again. DAM ensures brand consistency, which will boost brand recognition.

Security guaranteed

As the threat landscape grows and hackers continue to attack businesses and steal critical content, rallying your digital assets behind a single, secure source alleviates security concerns. Depending on the DAM you choose, cloud security and access privileges can halt threat actors and minimize threat verticals.

Boost efficiency with analytics

DAMs make it possible to analyze user activity. This makes it easy to get rich insights on how users work with your brand and which assets they use, allowing you to approach the right users and activate them. Besides that, it gives you insights on which assets are necessary and which ones aren't.



85%
Of users find
assets faster



80%
Increase of
asset reuse



15%
Annually saved
hours

The World of DAM

Let's talk DAM

If you're new in this DAM world, you might see some terms that you are unfamiliar with. Let's give you a quick update of common DAM terms:

Brand Portal

This is the home for your brand. It is a cloud-based online storage center where users can log in and find everything concerning their brand. Besides the DAM that is located in a Brand Portal, often the brand guidelines and templates can be found here.

API

Application Programming Interface (API) is a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other, making integrations with other (software) suppliers such as CRMs, PIMs and Adobe

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)

SaaS is a software distribution model in which a service provider hosts applications for customers and makes them online available. Most DAMs are SaaS-based because it offers a lot of benefits compared to traditional on-premise solutions.

Admin

Admin can mean two things: First, the person who is responsible for the DAM and has extended rights and access to the backside of the Brand Portal. This backside is the second definition of admin; the place where DAM is located.

Taxonomy

Taxonomy refers to classifying and ordering digital assets. A taxonomy structure should be set up to search and find digital assets.

Metadata

Metadata means data about data. In other words, metadata are the details about files, which can be anything: from file size to photographer details.

Tags and tagging

Tags are the extra labels you give to digital assets, information that is not yet included in the metadata. This process is called tagging.

Modern DAM Features

DAMs have evolved quickly over the past decade. Where DAM was just a media library a couple of years ago; now, most DAMs have very comprehensive features.

The following features can't be missed in a modern DAM:

Smart Search

This comprehensive search tool allows you to find assets easy and fast using metadata and tagging.

File preview

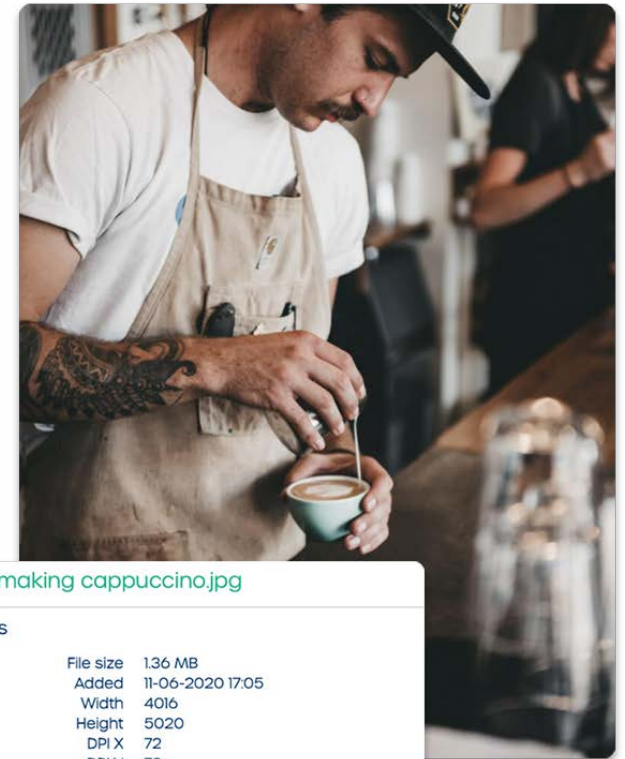
Allows you to preview files, including video, before opening or downloading them.

Open upload

Let users and non-users upload assets to the DAM without logging in.

Version control

Manage different file versions easily.



barista making cappuccino.jpg	
Properties	
File size	1.36 MB
Added	11-06-2020 17:05
Width	4016
Height	5020
DPI X	72
DPI Y	72
Colorspace	sRGB
Tags	barista cafe coffee bar latteart
Metadata	
Channel	Online , Web , Social Media
Campaign	A , D
Target audience	Students
Origin	Lifestyle Shoot

Workflows

Workflows allow you to set approvals for brand assets. For example, when users need to ask permission before downloading an asset.

Related items

Show assets that are related to each other.

Share

Easily share assets with others via a download link, email or custom collections.

Analytics

Analytics allow you to track user activity and asset downloads.

User and image rights

Create user groups and determine which users have access to which brand assets. Image (photographer or licence) rights can also be set in the DAM.

File formats/auto-convert

Allows you to choose different file formats to download.



Download PNG

Download JPG

The Future of DAM

Due to the rapidly developing technology, new DAM trends and features are also coming up fast.

The following DAM developments are currently in their early stage and will become standard in the near future.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Machines are slowly getting better at understanding and predicting human behavior. AI can be very beneficial because it enables DAMS to present content to the right people automatically. Recognition, crowdsourcing and auto-tag are some of the AI features that are becoming big DAM trends.

Apps

Because DAMs are web-based, digital assets can already be accessed on mobile devices. However, given the fact that we're living in a mobile era, more and more

DAMs are becoming available as extensive applications as well. The option to have an own DAM or brand app is extremely relevant for brands, giving their users always and everywhere access to digital assets, even when they don't have a computer nearby.

DAM as data-tool

DAMs are already the home of brands, being the to-go place for all brand materials. However, DAMS are also becoming the home of user and asset analytics. Most DAMs already have analytics features, being able to get insights on user activity and analyze asset use. This is currently being further developed by many DAM players, so DAMS can function as an all-in-one brand and data tool.

Choosing a DAM

Set a scope

Now you know everything about DAM, it's time for the next step. Before choosing a DAM vendor, it's essential to have a clear overview of your needs and desires. We listed the actions that will help you get started.

1. Identify company goals

It's important to set clear goals before choosing a DAM; what do you want to achieve with a DAM, and when should this be achieved? To answer these questions, it's vital to start with the basics. Where is your company today, and where does it want to be in the future?

2. Identify stakeholders and users

Before you select a DAM, it's essential to know who will work with the DAM. First, who are your stakeholders? Besides the usual stakeholders like management, IT, and marketing, there are many other stakeholders involved. Internal stakeholders like other departments and external stakeholders like media partners, photographers or resellers shouldn't be forgotten. Make a clear overview of how many people will use the DAM. Divide them into user groups and

talk to them to find out which demands they have individually. Taking their wishes into account will help you in making a reliable scope and move the project forward.

3. Calculate asset/library size

If you have an overview of your users, you have to calculate how many assets your brand needs to import to the DAM. Understanding how content and assets will grow over time is fundamental.

4. Calculate budget

DAMs can have a significant economic impact on your company. Besides the monthly or yearly subscription, most DAM vendors charge a purchase or implementation fee. Besides that, you will need staffing to manage and execute the DAM project, which should be included in your budget calculation as well.

Choose a vendor

If you have set a scope, you can identify the kind of DAM you need: what kind of features and integrations are necessary for your DAM.

1. List desired features and integrations

Which DAM features does your brand need? The company goals, user and asset types are the foundation for the feature list. List the current obstacles that your users are facing and ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your company need a DAM just for **organizing assets**, or do you need a more extensive system that also acts as a **brand management tool**?
- Do you wish to **integrate** with existing systems or external stakeholders?
- Which **functionalities** are you currently missing?
- What are your **security requirements**?
- Do you want your DAM to be **branded**?

Categorize your wishlist into features that are must-haves and nice-to-haves.

2. Compare vendors

Now you can finally make a list of providers that meet your needs. If you have found vendors that tick every box, it's important to look further than just the functional.

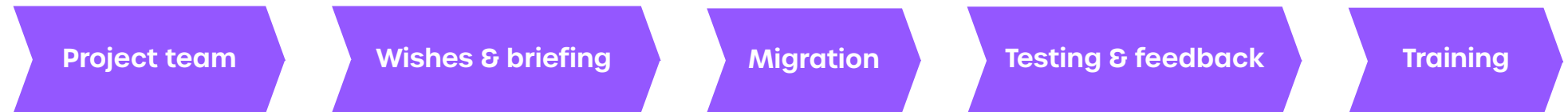
Besides features and budget, it's essential to know what other factors are relevant for your company. Think about security, implementation planning, customer success, user training, and the vendor's experience with other companies in the same industry. Above all, this is a company that you will be working with for the coming years (hopefully), so cultural fit is also very important.

Check software review websites (e.g. G2, Capterra), ask for factsheets, implementation planning, and any other relevant documentation. Finally, request a demo to discover if the DAM works for your brand.

Implementing DAM

Steps when implementing

Yes! You have chosen a DAM vendor. Once you have discussed which products, features and integrations are needed, it's time to prepare for implementation.



1. Make a DAM (project) team

The first step in a successful implementation is creating a DAM project team. The success of any technology implementation comes and goes with the people working on the project. It's best to have colleagues onboard from management, IT, marketing, and, if relevant, an end-user representative. Once you have chosen your d(re)am team, define each person's role and responsibilities for the project to avoid misunderstandings.

2. Define wishes and create briefing

Once you have selected your DAM team, it's time to define concrete wishes for your DAM. Things you should have thought about before implementation can start, are:

- **Branding**
- **Hierarchy**
- **Asset types**
- **User types/groups**
- **Folders**
- **Permissions**

Your DAM vendor's customer success team will share a document with the information they need from you.

3. (Prepare for) migration

We will be honest; the asset migration phase can be tough. However, it doesn't have to be. A taxonomy and keyword strategy is key to a smooth migration. Besides, this phase gives you the chance to do an asset clean up: only migrate the necessary assets.

4. Testing & feedback

Once the first version of the DAM is set up, it's time for some testing. Take your time with this. After your project team has first tested the DAM, it's recommended

to select a small user group to collect some end-user feedback and improve the system before moving on to the next step.

5. Inform and train users

You can have a perfectly implemented and organized DAM; it's worth nothing if your users don't know how to use it. A DAM implementation doesn't end when it's technically ready. Educating and training users is probably the most critical step when implementing DAM.



"Don't underestimate the training phase. The key to a successful DAM implementation is selecting a strong DAM project team and taking enough time for educating all admins and end-users. Well begun is half-done."

Maarten Peters / Customer Success Manager @ Marvia

About Marvia

Is Marvia the DAM for you?

Are you considering Marvia as your DAM solution? Let's give you an overview of our most comprehensive DAM features.

Marvia top DAM features:

- Smart Search
- File Preview
- Open Upload
- Related Items
- Version Control
- Workflows
- Analytics

Open upload



Add more files
3 Files - 2.1 GB Remaining

Marvia_logo_01_2400RGB Colour.png	45.7 KB
Device - Urbane Demi Bold.otf	45.4 KB
Marvia_logo_01_RGB Colour.ai	55.3 KB

Upload files without logging in

Add files by dragging them on the page
[or click here to upload.](#)



 Send files

Marvia Strengths

Great customer success program

Marvia is known for its quick onboarding, personal and reliable support team and its great user activation program.

Integrations

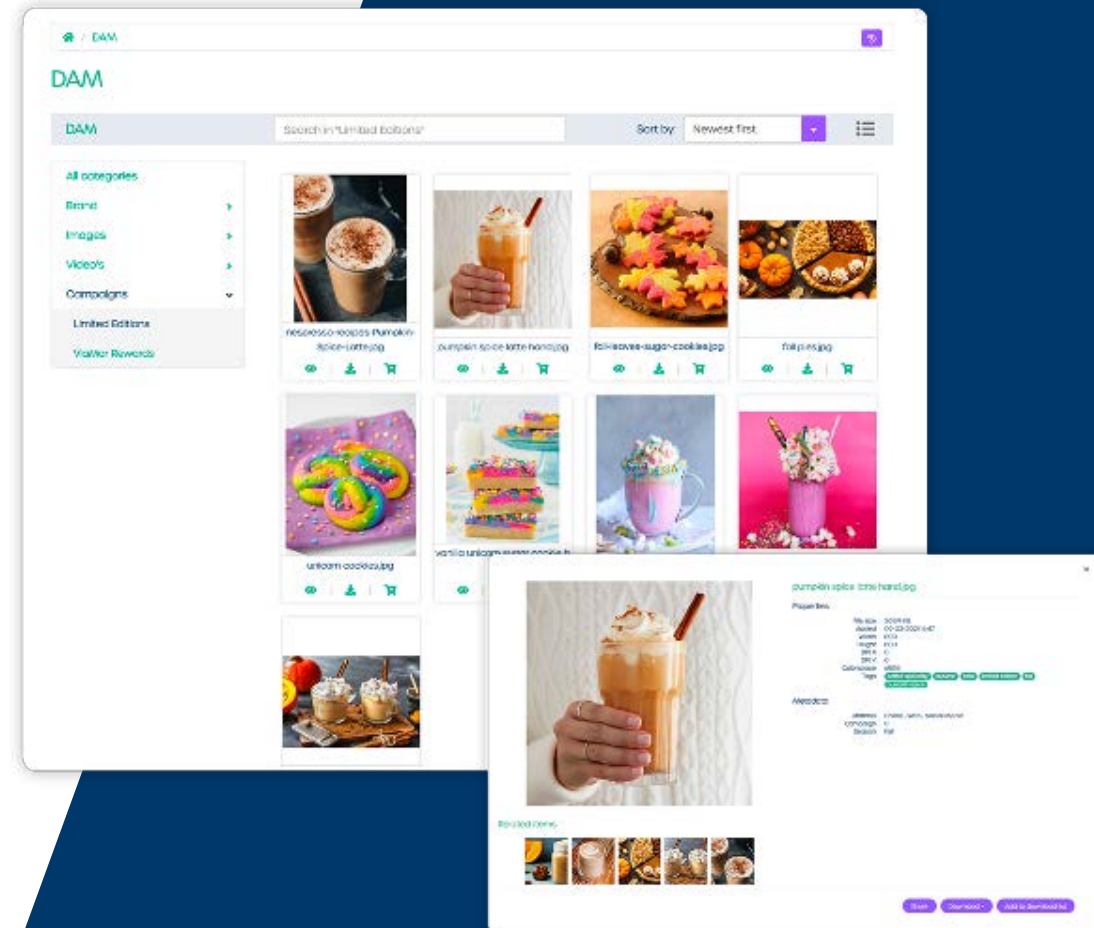
Marvia can connect with most third parties using API.

Customized portal

Every part of the DAM can be made on-brand.

All-in-one solution

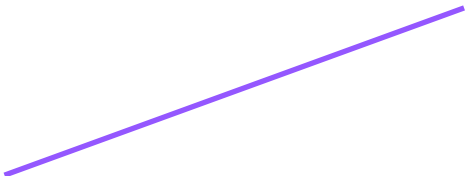
DAM is just one of the products we offer. If you're searching for a complete Brand Management solution, we advise you to take a look at our **Branded Templates** and **Digital Brand Guidelines** as well. Keep everything for your brand centralized in one interactive environment.





“Marvia has brought us a lot of relief. The portal is not only used as a media database, but it has become the central source for all our partners to get started with our brand. They no longer have to email or call for each file, which means that I can again focus on campaigns and content creation.”

Dennis / Marketing & e-Commerce Manager at Duux

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[Read full customer story](#)



About Marvia

Marvia makes brands more successful by providing tools to keep them in control of their brand and local marketing activities.

Our software helps leading brands in more than 90 countries with maximizing productivity and brand consistency.

Learn more about Marvia and our solutions on www.getmarvia.com

Would you like to see what Marvia can do for your brand? Request a free demo.

Free demo