Enterprise DAM improves efficiency.
CDW improves productivity and reduces costs through end-to-end asset management with Adobe Experience Manager.

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SOLUTION
Adobe Experience Cloud, including the Adobe Experience Manager solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud
Microsoft Azure

RESULTS
- Improves **PRODUCTIVITY** by making it faster and easier to access creative assets, saving approximately 20 hours per week
- Enhances governance by providing better **CONTROL** over how assets are used
- Sets the stage for **PERSONALIZATION** to connect with diverse audiences
- **CENTRALIZED** more than 4TB of digital assets used for direct mail, catalogs, signage, banners, and digital ads
Continual growth for the Fortune 500

For many companies, the key to long-term success is continued growth. This means continuing to serve current audiences with great products and services while also expanding to serve new audiences. But a growing number of audiences presents unique challenges for marketing. For example, a nonprofit organization has very different company and financial goals compared to a startup retail company, which affects the type of products and offers that will catch the attention of their audiences.

Few companies understand this challenge as well as CDW. Since 2001, CDW has steadily risen in the Fortune 500 rankings as a leading provider of technology products and services. The company offers a wide range of solutions—from hardware to security to software as a service—for an equally wide range of customers, including businesses, nonprofits, schools, healthcare organizations, and government agencies.

With so many potential audiences, competition is fierce for CDW. The company not only competes against specialized companies offering highly focused services for specific industries, but also major retailers such as Amazon that leverage scale to deliver solutions for any customer. CDW differentiates itself by delivering not just great solutions and services, but also meaningful advice and industry news that speak to the unique challenges of each audience. It’s the job of the company’s marketing and communications teams to connect each potential customer with relevant content.

CDW’s Content and Creative Services team uses Adobe Creative Cloud for enterprise to deliver the creative content needed for almost all marketing activities, including direct mail, print and digital catalogs, signage, banner advertisements, and digital ads. The team also produces consumable content that educates and informs its customers, including blog articles, white papers, case studies, and six award-winning magazines aimed at specific key segments, such as K-12 education or federal government.
In total, CDW stored four terabytes of creative assets—from articles and social posts to videos and logos—to support marketing activities. But according to Jim Garlow, Director of Content and Creative Services, the lack of a central digital asset management (DAM) system was hindering productivity, and ultimately affecting creativity.

“We stored assets in multiple locations across multiple file server folders,” says Garlow. “We didn’t have any sort of search system, so it was up to graphic designers to remember where they stored everything. Opportunities for improved efficiency were identified as coworkers spent extended time searching for assets and in some cases recreated existing assets.”

Storing assets in simple folders also affected governance and collaboration. Using logos or images not approved for the region or vertical could put CDW at risk of violating partners’ branding guidelines. But there was no automated process for managing copyrighted and branded content, so the Content and Creative Services team had to track expiration dates manually. Designers also could not share assets directly with coworkers, partners, agencies, or other systems, resulting in lost productivity as designers manually uploaded assets and juggled multiple versions.

“We decided to create best practices to improve content creation, access, and management by implementing a central DAM,” says Garlow. “By consolidating digital content on Adobe Experience Manager Assets, we’re improving production efficiency and giving our designers time to create content that engages all audiences.”

**Strong integrations lead to success**

When CDW started searching for a DAM, its Marketing leadership encouraged the team to look at standardizing on vendors to encourage strong integrations. CDW had already deployed Adobe Experience Cloud solutions, including Adobe Analytics in Adobe Analytics Cloud and Adobe Experience Manager Sites in Adobe Marketing Cloud, across other teams, and creative staff used Adobe Creative Cloud to develop assets. As a result, CDW quickly added Adobe Experience Manager Assets to the short list for possible DAMs.

After comparing potential DAMs, Adobe Experience Manager Assets rose to the top of the list. Standardizing on Adobe for creative and marketing workflows sets the stage for easier implementation and strong integrations. CDW also appreciated that it could choose a Managed Services deployment for Experience Manager Assets on a Microsoft Azure environment. “CDW recognized the value of the Adobe and Microsoft partnership and we saw this as an opportunity to deepen our relationships and take advantage of the growing Azure platform to support our Adobe solutions,” says Garlow.

NextRow Digital worked closely with CDW to establish a taxonomy for critical metadata and tagging practices, migrate assets over to Experience Manager Assets, and integrate with e-commerce. “Every day that CDW was working with its old system of folders, it was losing efficiency,” says Brandon Parduhn, Strategic Account Executive at NextRow Digital. “With Adobe Experience Manager Assets, CDW is sharing and reusing assets across multiple business units to create more digital content that wins over audiences.”
Jim Garlow, Director of Content and Creative Services, CDW Corporation

Improving quality through higher productivity

Since centralizing assets on Adobe Experience Manager Assets, the Content and Creative Services team has seen dramatic productivity improvements. A rich taxonomy of logical metadata and descriptive tags helps define each asset and makes it easily searchable for creators.

For example, if designers previously wanted to use an image of a doctor looking at medical information on a mobile device, they would need to scroll through thousands of photos in each healthcare folder to find one that might work. Now designers simply type in important keywords such as “doctor” and “smartphone” to quickly narrow down the options. Designers know that all available images are also located in a single location, so there’s no need to look elsewhere. Not only do designers spend less time searching for the right assets, but they also no longer spend time recreating duplicate assets. Just as importantly, designers can deliver higher quality content because they can easily find the assets that match their creative vision.

“Overall, the team has saved approximately 20 hours a week from faster search and streamlined workflows,” says Garlow. “We’re improving asset reuse rates and reducing creative costs while still delivering highly creative content that connects with customers.”

Reducing risk with better governance and control

In addition to improved search, Adobe Experience Manager Assets improves governance by giving CDW greater visibility and control over assets. Designers must always be aware of how they use partner or product logos. Each company may have several dozen logos that should be used only for certain regions, verticals, product lines, or other specific situations. Using the wrong logo in an ad puts CDW at risk of violating partner branding agreements. With Experience Manager Assets, CDW can clearly label logos, add clear expiration dates, or even restrict usage to specific teams or business units.

“Before implementing Experience Manager Assets as our DAM, we struggled with control and protection of our materials,” said Garlow. “Now, we have a better process and system in place to make sure our internal customers are only accessing the appropriate materials for their specific needs—ultimately reducing our risk of violating branding agreements with our partners.”

The improved governance also applies to agencies. Before, CDW staff acted as intermediaries between internal servers and agencies. It could take up to a full day just to download files from cloud-based drives or emails and organize them into the correct internal folders. Now agencies have access to their own folders in Experience Manager Assets where they can upload and tag created assets, eliminating the need for staff to spend time on asset administration. This gives designers even more time to concentrate on polishing customer content.
Attracting customers through personalization

With a DAM in place, CDW is now ready to grow personalization. The company already personalizes targeted ads and publications. An ad aimed at K-12 schools might emphasize how a piece of software is flexible and easy to use in a classroom, while a version for higher education might showcase how students can use the software to learn career-critical skills. Now that assets are centralized and tagged into clear categories, CDW can start tracking the characteristics of website visitors to automatically segment visitors and send them interesting and relevant content.

"In an extremely competitive landscape, CDW must continue to increase personalization of messages for our diverse customer set," says Garlow. "Adobe Experience Manager Assets provides the strong foundation that we need to support custom messaging that engages our customers."

For more information
www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html