

VIAMEDICI



Automation and AI for Automotive PIM

How Automotive PIM masters the complexity of compatibility, global standards and B2B2C channels.

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I. THE COMPLEX REALITY OF THE AUTOMOTIVE AFTERMARKET

The automotive aftermarket (IAM) is undergoing a profound transformation. Pervasive digitalisation, rapidly growing globalisation and a constant increase in the complexity of vehicle models and parts are no longer distant future scenarios – they are the daily operational reality. For parts manufacturers and distributors, the number of SKUs (Stock Keeping Units) to be managed has risen sharply. Every part stands in a complex relationship with vehicles, engines and other components. Mastering this complexity has become the central competitive prerequisite.

What fundamentally distinguishes the aftermarket from other industries is its unique B2B2C ecosystem. A manufacturer does not sell directly to clearly defined customers. It serves a multi-layered chain of players, all of whom place different – and often contradictory – data requirements on the same product:

- **The distributor (B2B):** Primarily needs logistics data. It evaluates a part by its storability, packaging units, weight and margin.
- **The workshop (B2B):** Needs application data. Its most valuable asset is time. It must identify a part quickly and error-free via an OE number or vehicle data. Every incorrectly ordered part blocks a lift and causes immediate costs.
- **The end customer (B2C/DIY):** Looks for marketing data. They need emotive images, installation guides, videos and trust signals in order to make a purchase decision.

A PIM system in the aftermarket must therefore be able to manage and deliver these multiple, context-dependent “views” of a product simultaneously.

This complex market is essentially divided into the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) – that is, the vehicle manufacturer itself – and the Independent Aftermarket (IAM), the free spare-parts market. For the IAM, the main economic driver is the number and age of the vehicles in the fleet, the so-called “Vehicles in Operation” (VIO). The most profitable phase, the “sweet spot”, lies with vehicles aged six to twelve years. These vehicles fall out of the manufacturer’s warranty and require repairs significantly more often. The steadily ageing vehicle fleet thus secures the IAM robust, medium-term growth.

At the same time, this traditional profit pool faces a fundamental, long-term upheaval: the shift to electromobility (EVs). Battery-electric vehicles have drastically fewer mechanical components and wear parts. High-volume, highly profitable product categories such as spark plugs, filters and exhaust systems become obsolete. This creates a strategic dilemma: companies must master the maximum complexity of the profitable existing business (ICE vehicles) while simultaneously building entirely new data models for EV-specific components (batteries, charging infrastructure), for which established data or service models often do not yet exist.

EXCURSUS

The dual market future: VIO and the EV threat

The profitability of the market is shaped by two core economic drivers pulling in opposite directions:

1. The ageing vehicle fleet (VIO): Sector profitability rests on the number of “Vehicles in Operation” (VIO). The aftermarket “sweet spot” lies with vehicles aged 6 to 12 years, which fall out of warranty and become more repair-prone. The growing, ageing fleet of internal combustion (ICE) vehicles secures profitable growth for the near future.

2. The electric vehicle (EV) threat: At the same time, the shift to EVs poses a “fundamental, long-term threat” to the traditional business model. High-volume wear parts such as spark plugs, filters and exhaust systems become obsolete.

A strategic PIM system must be able to manage this ambiguity. On one hand, it must handle the maximum complexity of millions of ICE parts and their fitment data to optimise the profitable existing business. On the other, it must be capable of building entirely new data models for EV-specific components (batteries, charging infrastructure), for which no historical data or established standards yet exist.

The combination of B2B2C requirements, the balancing act between VIO and EVs, and global digitalisation leads to a core problem: a highly fragmented data universe. Critical product information is often scattered across isolated data silos – in ERP systems, legacy PLM databases, countless spreadsheets and with individual suppliers. This lack of a central, reliable data source leads to inefficiency, manual errors, high return rates and missed market opportunities. To succeed in this complex reality, an efficient, centralised data solution is no longer optional – it is a strategic necessity.

II. MANAGING COMPATIBILITY AND VEHICLE APPLICATION

The true currency in the automotive aftermarket is not the physical part, but the information that guarantees its fit. A single error in application data – assigning the wrong part to a vehicle – triggers a cascade of negative consequences. For a professional workshop (DIFM), time is the most critical factor. An incorrect part blocks a lift, causes immediate costs and destroys trust in the supplier.

Accurate vehicle applications, also called “fitment”, are therefore not merely a data attribute, but the decisive factor for customer service, brand loyalty and reducing costly returns. This chapter examines the three central challenges that make managing this data so uniquely complex.

Compatibilities & relationships

The complexity in the aftermarket lies not in the number of parts themselves, but in the exponential number of relationships between them. A PIM system must map a highly relational network that goes far beyond a simple product-category structure.

- **Multiple relationships:** The system must manage multiple, complex links between vehicles, engines, assemblies and individual parts. Handling this complexity requires powerful navigation tools, ranging from visual navigation of a vehicle family tree (make, model, engine) to tabular mass editing of thousands of assignments.
- **The OE reference number:** The original equipment part number (OE number) is the industry’s universal “translation key”. Workshops and dealers almost never search by the aftermarket manufacturer’s own part number, but by the OE number of the part they need to replace. Meticulous upkeep of this reference is the starting point for all part identification and the basis for correct vehicle assignment.
- **Interchange and comparison numbers:** Beyond the OE number, managing competitor cross-reference numbers is a directly revenue-boosting measure. Mapping which own product matches a competitor’s part maximises “findability” in dealer catalogues. This actively wins market share from competitors whenever their product is unavailable.
- **Product lifecycle & accessories:** The PIM must map a part’s entire lifecycle. This includes managing supersessions, where an old part is replaced by a defined “successor”. Equally critical is linking accessory parts to unlock cross-selling and up-selling potential in digital channels. Functions for creating detailed product comparisons round out this requirement.

Application restrictions (qualifiers & criteria)

Even when a part is correctly assigned to a vehicle model, the fit is often not universal. Avoiding mis-orders depends on the precise communication of so-called “application restrictions” – known in industry jargon as “qualifiers” or “criteria”.

These are the essential notes and restrictions that make the difference between a successful repair and a return. Classic examples include:

- “left-hand drive only”
- “up to chassis number...”
- “only for vehicles with air conditioning”
- “only for brake system B”

A PIM system must not store this critical information as unstructured free text in a notes field. The requirement is digital, structured, multilingual storage of these restrictions as their own data objects. Only when these criteria are machine-readable can they be used for filtering in e-commerce systems and correctly transmitted to industry catalogues. To increase efficiency when maintaining data for new vehicle models, processes must be in place that allow existing compatibilities and restrictions to be carried over from predecessor products.

Global data standards

The third challenge is the global nature of the business. An international supplier must master two fundamentally different “data universes” in parallel, without error.

- **TecDoc (Europe):** The European market operates through the centralised TecDoc ecosystem. The logic is based on a “three-key system”: a manufacturer’s part is assigned to a standardised generic article (e.g. “brake disc”) and linked to a standardised vehicle from the vehicle master (often identified via a K-Type number). Managing cross-references and criteria is central here.
- **ACES/PIES (North America):** The North American market is decentralised and based on two separate standards:
 - **PIES** (Product Information Exchange Standard): Answers the question “What is the part?”. It is the product’s “passport”, containing all attributes such as marketing texts, logistics data and technical specifications, standardised via the “PAdb” (Product Attribute Database).
 - **ACES** (Aftermarket Catalog Exchange Standard): Answers the question “Where does the part fit?”. It contains the pure fitment data and links the part to a vehicle configuration from the central “VCdb” (Vehicle Configuration Database).
- **FRAGA (South America):** The information-technology backbone of the Latin American aftermarket, with a focus on Brazil. Similar to TecDoc, FRAGA structures part numbers across manufacturers and links them to the regional vehicle fleet. Local market particularities must be considered, such as mapping region-specific vehicle variants (e.g. flex-fuel engines).
- **Market and e-commerce standards (Klipboard, SEMA, eBay, Amazon):** Beyond the three major standards, suppliers must also serve specialised marketplace structures. In the B2B space this includes Klipboard AutoCat with its “Make Model Index” (MMI) for the UK, as well as SEMA Data, the standard for the North American tuning and accessories sector. In B2C and D2C, data structures from the major marketplaces dominate: the eBay Master Vehicle List (MVL) – governed by K-Type keys in Europe – and Amazon PartFinder (“confirmed fit”).

An automotive PIM must not “think” in any one of these standards. It must act as a neutral “bridge”. It manages product data in an agnostic master format and acts as a translator, transforming the data on export exactly into the format required by each channel (TecDoc, ACES or PIES).

III. FULL DATA CONTROL THROUGH A CENTRAL AUTOMOTIVE PIM

Given the complexity outlined in the previous chapters, it is clear that fragmented data and manual processes are not a viable strategy for the future. Data silos between ERP, PLM systems and countless spreadsheets inevitably lead to errors, inefficiencies and missed market opportunities.

The solution lies in establishing a central, governing authority that regains data sovereignty. A modern automotive PIM is no longer a passive data store, but an active business-process engine. It is the technological answer to the challenges of data control, quality and process governance.

The PIM as a “Single Source of Truth” (SSOT)

The first and most important step towards data control is eliminating data silos. A PIM system is defined as a central data hub – a “Single Source of Truth” (SSOT). It acts as the nervous system connecting all data-bearing systems in the company.

- **Upstream systems:** The PIM consolidates the “raw” master data from upstream systems. This typically includes logistics and pricing information from ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) as well as technical specifications or CAD data from PLM (Product Lifecycle Management).
- **Downstream systems:** The PIM enriches this base data and distributes the resulting “golden record” in a controlled way to all downstream channels – whether the e-commerce shop, a dealer portal, or exports to industry standards such as TecDoc and ACES/PIES.

This centralisation is the essential prerequisite for every subsequent step. It ensures that every department works from the same, validated data foundation.

Ensuring data quality & governance

Full data control means more than central storage – above all, it means actively governing data quality. An automotive PIM implements robust data governance on several levels:

- **Validation rules:** Rather than finding errors at the end of a long process, the PIM enforces quality right at data entry. Rule-based validation (e.g. “price must not be zero”, “attribute X is mandatory for product category Y”) proactively prevents incomplete or illogical records.
- **Data enrichment:** The PIM is where technical data is refined into compelling, sales-ready content. This covers not only specifications, but also marketing copy, translations, synonyms for better findability, and SEO-optimised content.
- **Detailed rights management:** Governance requires control. A PIM uses a granular roles-and-permissions system to ensure that only authorised staff can view, edit or approve specific data. This creates clear accountability and protects sensitive data from unintended changes.

Steering IAM processes through workflow management

The true strength of a modern PIM lies in its ability to evolve from a passive database into an active process-control engine. It increases efficiency by replacing manual coordination (via email or spreadsheets) with rule-based, automated workflows.

- **Example 1 – New product introduction:** Launching a new part is a complex process requiring dozens of steps across many departments (product management, engineering, compliance, marketing, purchasing). A PIM workflow breaks this process into logical, multi-stage milestones. The system guides participants sequentially through data capture, enrichment and approval, ensuring no step is missed.
- **Example 2 – Supplier change:** When the supplier for a component changes, this triggers a chain of necessary checks. A PIM workflow can automate this process by assigning tasks: to compliance to verify new certificates, to purchasing to update terms, and to engineering to validate specifications.
- **Further core processes:** Workflow management covers the entire product lifecycle, from ongoing master-data maintenance (e.g. adding new cross-reference numbers) to controlled product phase-out, where it is ensured that a successor item (supersession) is defined before the old item is deactivated.

CASE STUDY

The new-product creation process

The playbook of a major automotive supplier provides a perfect real-world example of PIM as a process engine. Its process for product launches is a highly structured, multi-stage workflow governing international new-product creation:

- **Phase 1 – Data capture and enrichment:** In this phase, the product’s “digital twin” is created in the PIM. Various departments (product management, engineering, compliance, marketing) work in parallel within the system to enrich the item with all technical attributes, vehicle applications, marketing copy and compliance documents.
- **Phase 2 – Final approval process:** Once all preceding milestones have been passed and all quality checks completed, final approval is granted. Only this step triggers the automatic distribution of data to all target systems (ERP, catalogues).

Efficient supplier onboarding

A significant share of product data does not originate in internal systems, but comes from external suppliers. Manually capturing this data is a well-known bottleneck that slows time-to-market.

An automotive PIM solves this problem through integrated supplier onboarding:

- **Central supplier portal:** Instead of exchanging data by email, the PIM offers a portal where suppliers register themselves and deliver their product data (e.g. via CSV upload or API) in a standardised way.
- **Automated validation:** The system automatically checks incoming data against predefined quality and format standards. Faulty or incomplete data is flagged back immediately, before it ever reaches the PIM system.
- **Central document management:** The portal also allows all relevant supporting documents – contracts, compliance documents (e.g. REACH/RoHS) and certifications – to be managed centrally and linked directly to the supplier profile and the relevant products.

Process control via the PIM dashboard

Managing these parallel workflows requires a central “cockpit”. The PIM dashboard is the control centre that creates transparency across all running processes.

- **Active task management:** For the individual employee (e.g. in product management, purchasing or marketing), the dashboard acts as a personalised to-do list. It shows every assigned task (e.g. “approve text for item X”) and leads directly to the editing screen with a click.
- **Progress monitoring:** For team and department leads, the dashboard offers a complete overview, visualising the status of every product launch or change in progress.
- **Bottleneck identification:** The dashboard’s most strategically important function is proactively identifying bottlenecks. Managers can immediately see which process step or department is blocking a go-live. This transparency makes it possible to escalate and resolve problems before they cause serious delays.

IV. PERFECT DATA FOR EVERY CHANNEL

Once product data has been centralised in the “Single Source of Truth”, validated and released through governed workflows (as described in Chapter III), the last and decisive step follows: going to market. The superior data quality built up in the PIM system is worthless if it does not reach every point of the value chain quickly, error-free and – above all – in the right format for each channel.

The need for data syndication follows from the fundamental fact that not every channel requires the same data in the same format. An internal management report has different requirements than an e-commerce shop, a global marketplace, or the highly standardised TecDoc catalogue. A modern PIM system must therefore act not only as a central source, but as an active “transformation engine” that prepares and delivers validated data fully automatically and channel-specifically.

Publication channels (internal & external)

The publication channels to be served are diverse, spanning every area of the business:

- **Internal channels:** Departments such as sales, marketing and controlling need permanent access to consistent data for reports, strategic analysis and day-to-day sales work.
- **E-commerce & marketplaces:** This includes the company's own B2B or B2C webshop as well as global marketplaces such as Amazon and eBay. These channels demand high-frequency updates, rich marketing data (images, videos) and perfectly maintained SEO attributes.
- **Dealer portals and customer systems:** Specialised dealer portals and wholesalers' inventory-management systems are often connected via dedicated API connectors to exchange data in near real time.
- **Print catalogues (database publishing):** Despite digitalisation, the printed catalogue remains an important element in many markets. Modern PIM systems use "database publishing" to drive the (semi-)automated creation of extensive catalogues, price lists and technical data sheets – reducing production effort from months to a few days.

Export to industry standards

The discipline that matters most in the automotive aftermarket is the error-free, automated delivery of the global industry standards. A specialised automotive PIM must master this as a core capability:

- **Automated exports to TecDoc:** For the European market, conformity with the TecDoc standard is essential. The PIM must be able to automatically generate and validate the complex export formats, including support for older versions such as 2.x and the newer version 3.0.
- **Automated exports to ACES/PIES:** In parallel, generating valid ACES (fitment) and PIES (product attribute) exports is required for the North American market. Specialised “trading partner modules” help map the specific requirements of individual dealers.
- **Converting other standards:** Automated conversion and mapping to other industry standards such as eCI@ss or ETIM is often also required to serve adjacent industry segments or large industrial customers.

The future of syndication (real time)

The future of data syndication lies in speed. The industry is moving away from slow, file-based batch updates (e.g. monthly exports) towards agile, real-time interfaces (APIs). A PIM system that is not designed “API-first” will no longer meet future market demands.

An outstanding example of this shift is TecAlliance's TecDoc IDP (Instant Data Processing) interface. IDP enables real-time data updates in the global TecDoc catalogue – price corrections, new vehicle applications or product launches go live instantly, rather than waiting for the next batch export. Viamedici is connected to TecDoc IDP via standardised APIs, enabling its customers to use this real-time syndication without batch delays. This has been successfully implemented in production at well-known automotive suppliers. This speed advantage is a decisive competitive factor.

EXCURSUS

PIM as the engine for omnichannel sales

The PIM is the “Single Source of Truth”, but its ultimate purpose is a “Single Source of Distribution”. It must deliver perfect, channel-specific data to every touchpoint of the go-to-market strategy: dealer portals, e-commerce shops, marketplaces such as Amazon and eBay, and above all the industry catalogues.

This includes flawless generation of TecDoc and ACES/PIES export formats. But the way this syndication happens is changing dramatically. The industry is moving away from slow, file-based “batch updates” towards “API-first” architectures. A “revolutionary solution” here is the TecDoc IDP (Instant Data Processing) interface – a real-time API connection replacing the old, sluggish TAF format. The table below illustrates the strategic difference.

Table: The evolution of data syndication in the automotive aftermarket

Feature	Traditional syndication (e.g. TAF)	Modern syndication (e.g. TecDoc IDP API)
Method	Data dumps (e.g. monthly exports)	API calls (real time)
Format	Proprietary file formats (e.g. TAF)	Standardised formats (JSON, XML)
Speed	Batch processing (slow, >24h)	“Instant data processing” (immediate)
Agility	Static – changes only visible in the next cycle	Dynamic – price or status changes go live instantly
PIM requirement	Export module	API-first architecture, bidirectional connectivity
Strategic value	“We deliver data.”	“We are connected to the market in real time.”

This development has far-reaching implications. A PIM system that does not support a modern API architecture – and in particular no IDP connectivity – is technologically outdated and represents a business risk. If a competitor can correct a pricing error or a stock shortage instantly via API, while a company with an old PIM has to wait a month for the next TAF export, it loses margin, customers and trust. Real-time syndication is not a “nice-to-have”, but a critical competitive advantage.

Active sales enablement

The data maintained in the PIM is not only relevant for automated exports – it also serves as a powerful weapon for active sales enablement:

- **Online product catalogue (OPC):** An online product catalogue connected to the PIM gives the sales field team an up-to-the-day tool that also works on mobile tablets. Outdated Excel price lists are a thing of the past.
- **Specific sales searches:** Unlike public catalogues, an internal sales portal offers specific search functions that are decisive in a sales conversation – for example, direct search by a national key number or an engine code.
- **Using cross-references:** The salesperson can instantly access every maintained cross-reference (OE numbers and competitor parts) during a customer conversation. They can immediately show the workshop alternatives, demonstrating their expertise.
- **Dynamic data sheets:** Instead of relying on outdated brochures, the sales representative can generate dynamic PDF data sheets or customer-specific catalogue excerpts with up-to-the-day data, images and prices at the click of a button, and send them directly to the customer.

V. STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES: PIM AS A BUSINESS ENABLER

Implementing a central PIM solution is far more than a technical modernisation of data management. It is a strategic decision that redefines the fundamental value contribution of product data within the company. A PIM system transforms from a reactive data steward – a pure “system of record” – into a proactive business enabler. It becomes the central intelligence platform that not only optimises internal processes, but actively steers the company’s commercial strategy and risk management.

Reduced time-to-market

One of the most immediate and measurable benefits is a drastic reduction in time-to-market. In a market where the first mover often wins the largest share, speed is decisive. Traditional, email-based approval processes are slow, opaque and error-prone. A PIM system replaces this chaos with the automated workflows described in Chapter III. Instead of waiting for the last approval click, departments such as R&D, manufacturing, marketing and sales can work in parallel on the product’s “digital twin”. The PIM dashboard makes bottlenecks instantly visible, so management can intervene proactively instead of reacting to delays.

Data-driven assortment & product strategy

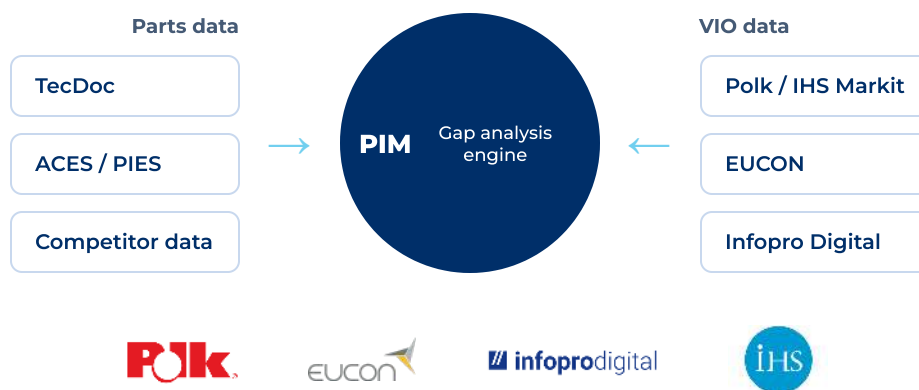
Perhaps the biggest strategic shift lies in using the PIM as a business-intelligence tool. Rather than only managing internal data, the PIM becomes the central platform for ingesting and analysing external market data.

A decisive step is importing and integrating VIO data (Vehicles in Operation) and parts-penetration figures from external providers such as Polk/IHS Markit, EUCON or Infopro Digital. The PIM system compares this fleet data (e.g. “how many vehicles of type X are registered in region Y?”) against the company’s own portfolio – turning a simple parts list into a data-driven potential heatmap that shows management, at the click of a button, where the greatest market potential lies. This capability is extended through importing data from industry standards such as TecDoc or ACES/PIES, as well as actively maintaining competitor data (prices, cross-references). The PIM can now run automated market and gap analyses, proactively answering strategic questions: which OE numbers do our competitors cover that we do not yet? Which vehicles are about to fall out of warranty (the “sweet spot”) for which we do not yet offer parts? The PIM thus identifies profitable “white spots” on the map and provides the data-driven foundation for the next product-development pipeline.

EXCURSUS**Strategic gap analysis through VIO integration**

The strategic question in product management is: “Which part should we develop next?” The answer must be data-driven. Leading automotive aftermarket suppliers call this “revenue-potential analysis”, “gap analysis” or “competitive analysis”. A PIM case example from our project experience shows the exact mechanism: the “integration of potential figures (VIO)”.

The PIM system compares external market data on the vehicle fleet (VIO) – e.g. from providers such as Polk/IHS Markit – with the company’s own product portfolio managed in the PIM. The result is a data-founded gap analysis: the system identifies “white spots” – vehicle models with high VIO (many cars on the road) for which the company does not yet offer spare parts in certain product areas, countries or sales channels. It answers the question: “Where is the largest untapped market potential?”

DATA-DRIVEN ASSORTMENT & PRODUCT STRATEGY**From PIM to business-intelligence tool**

Well-founded commercial decisions

A PIM system at the highest maturity level acts as a commercial decision engine. It is used to run profitability or margin calculations directly within the system. Rather than relying on external spreadsheets, the PIM brings the relevant factors together in one place: estimated costs (from ERP), planned selling prices (from product management), and data-driven market potential (from VIO data). This calculation becomes a fixed part of the product-launch workflow. Management no longer makes the “go/no-go” investment decision from gut feeling, but on the basis of a valid business case created and documented in the PIM.

Automated market releases & compliance control

In a globalised market, compliance with country-specific regulations, standards and laws is not optional – it is a “license to operate”. The PIM system becomes a digital “gatekeeper” that proactively protects the company from legal and financial risk. This is achieved through the systematic management of approvals and certificates, linked directly to products and their target countries. The decisive mechanism is “country exclusion” logic: an automated check governed by the PIM workflow assesses compliance status. If a product lacks a certificate required for country X, its sales status for that country is automatically set to “blocked”. This information is transmitted to the ERP system in real time, systemically preventing the sale of a non-conformant part into that market before it can happen.

EXCURSUS

PIM as a digital enabler: automating compliance and risk management

In a global market, regulatory compliance is not an optional step, but a “license to operate”. Regulatory complexity is immense (e.g. EPA, CARB in the US; E-mark, TÜV in Europe), and a breach can lead to substantial fines, recalls and severe reputational damage.

A PIM system is a company’s strongest line of defence against these risks, acting as an automated, proactive “gatekeeper” or “digital firewall”. A typical example from a supplier:

1. **Systematic management:** All certificates, standards and approvals are first managed as data objects in the PIM.
2. **Compliance workflow:** The PIM actively governs how compliance checks control an item's sales status in a given country.
3. **“Country exclusion” logic:** An automated rules engine manages country approvals and exclusions.

The causal chain of this automated firewall is a textbook example of a PIM's strategic value:

1. A product manager changes the supplier for a component in Asia.
2. The PIM workflow (e.g. a "supplier-change process") automatically triggers a task for the compliance department.
3. The compliance department reviews the new material and determines in the PIM that it is not REACH-compliant (an EU chemicals regulation). It changes the status of the "REACH check" to "not OK".
4. The "country exclusion" logic immediately detects this change and automatically sets the sales status to "blocked" for all countries in the European Union.
5. This status change is syndicated to the ERP system in real time.

The result: a sales representative in France can no longer physically sell the product, even if they try. The PIM has proactively and automatically prevented legal and financial risk for the entire company, without any human intervention needed in the sales process.

Efficiency gains in marketing & sales through AI

The next level of efficiency is unlocked by integrating artificial intelligence into PIM processes. AI technologies not only automate repetitive tasks, but add an entirely new layer of intelligence.

- **Generative AI (GenAI):** GenAI revolutionises content creation. Instead of product managers manually writing hundreds of texts, GenAI can generate SEO-optimised product descriptions and marketing copy at the click of a button, including automated translation for global markets. AI can also assist with data-quality checks by detecting inconsistencies or gaps in attributes, or automatically suggesting metadata and tags for digital assets. Even dynamic price optimisation based on AI-driven elasticity analysis becomes possible.
- **Agentic AI:** Agentic AI goes a step further and automates entire processes. AI agents can act proactively – for example, generating automated promotion suggestions for underperforming items. In after-sales support, AI assistants and chatbots connected directly to the PIM's real-time data can answer customer questions on compatibility or installation instantly and accurately.

The speed at which marketing and sales data can be pushed to new sales platforms creates significant channel conflicts, but also makes PIM-driven e-commerce infrastructure a “decisive competitive weapon”. The manufacturer that offers the best digital experience – error-free catalogue data, real-time stock and precise compatibility checks – wins the loyalty of the modern workshop, regardless of the procurement channel chosen.

VI. WHY VIAMEDICI: YOUR PARTNER FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE AFTERMARKET

The preceding chapters have painted a clear picture: the automotive aftermarket is no ordinary market. It is a highly complex ecosystem dominated by the relational data of compatibility, irreconcilable global standards, global compliance requirements, and the need for data-driven business intelligence.

Generic PIM systems, designed for B2C retail or simple manufactured goods, are structurally unable to cope with this complexity. They fail at the relational depth of vehicle applications and cannot support the business-critical processes that go beyond pure data storage.

Companies in the automotive aftermarket do not need a “normal” PIM. They need a strategic command centre for their product data – a platform built from the ground up to:

1. ...manage the complexity of millions of vehicle applications (compatibility) and application restrictions, error-free.
2. ...act fluently as a “translator” between global standards such as TecDoc and ACES/PIES.
3. ...steer internal workflows such as new-product introduction or supplier onboarding as an active process engine.
4. ...enable strategic gap analyses as a BI tool through the integration of VIO data and competitor analysis.
5. ...unlock the efficiency potential of AI for content creation and process automation as a future-proof platform.

This is exactly where Viamedici is positioned. The Viamedici platform was built specifically for industries with the highest data complexity. It combines the stability of a single source of truth with the agility of an intelligent process engine.

High system performance

A decisive factor here is high system performance. In an industry where assortments with millions of vehicle applications are not unusual, the Viamedici architecture guarantees the speed and stability essential for managing these complex data structures and supporting global sales teams.

This architecture matters for large automotive assortments because it can run high data volumes, many concurrent users and intensive background processes – imports, exports, validations and asset processing – separately and at scale. In practice, it delivers stable performance across millions of SKUs through workload isolation and on-demand scaling of individual platform areas without downtime. This allows automotive customers to continuously maintain, enrich and syndicate large assortments without operational users being materially affected by load spikes.

EXCURSUS

A leading supplier masters global complexity

To translate theory into practice, the following success story serves as a blueprint for how implementing a specialised PIM platform transforms business outcomes.

The challenge (business objective)

A global Tier-1 supplier faced typical growing pains: product data was spread across multiple ERP instances, local databases and countless spreadsheets. This resulted in a slow time-to-market of almost a year for new products. Even more critically, a high return rate in the growing e-commerce channel could be traced directly back to faulty or incomplete fitment data (incorrect vehicle assignments). The company lacked a central, reliable data source.

The solution

The company chose to implement the Viamedici platform as its global “Single Source of Truth”. The solution covered three core areas:

- **Consolidation:** Connecting all ERP systems and the DAM (Digital Asset Management) to the PIM to create a single “golden record” for all products.
- **Process automation:** Digitalising the entire new-product-introduction workflow. A multi-stage, milestone-based process now guides every department (product management, engineering, compliance, marketing) through data capture and approval.
- **Standardisation:** Implementing modules to manage and automatically export TecDoc and ACES/PIES data from the same central source.

The results (outcomes)

The results after 18 months were transformative:

- **Reduced time-to-market:** The average time to launch new products fell from eight months to under six weeks.
- **Lower return rate:** Thanks to centrally managed, validated compatibility data and application restrictions, the e-commerce return rate fell by 22%.
- **Process efficiency:** Previously manual, email-driven approval processes were fully streamlined. For the first time, management gained full transparency over process bottlenecks through the PIM dashboards.
- **Increased flexibility:** The company can now serve new markets or marketplaces faster, since all data is already centralised and of high quality.

transformation
starts here

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