



eBook

Optimizing Your Product Feed Management

How to audit, improve and transform your data to meet the requirements of every channel



Transform Your Data and Feeds for Every Channel

Investment in product advertising by brands and retailers is at an all-time high. And digital ad share continues to grow, in particular, for leading ad destinations like Google, Meta and TikTok.

For brands and retailers looking to put their products in front of more consumers, campaign setup and management is an extremely important aspect of driving performance. But it's just one side of the coin.

On the other side is product data and all associated processes, which have an equally significant impact on the effectiveness of your advertising. Proper management of your product data and feeds is essential for e-commerce success, regardless of your business size, product category or technical background.

How do your feeds stack up?

In this guide, we help you assess, optimize and supercharge your current feeds and management processes to improve performance on every channel.



Assess Your Feed Management Maturity

Assessing your feed management maturity can help you understand your current feed performance and data quality. You can use the same feed management maturity model we leverage to assess the status of Rithum customers and prospects.

While you might be at various points in your feed management maturity across different capabilities, there are a few critical areas where best-in-class status is a must:

- Optimization capabilities
- Delivery strategy
- New feed generation
- Feed failure discovery

Unsure where you stand? Consider the following questions and criteria.

Optimization Capabilities

- Do you currently automate your optimization activities?
- Do you have QA processes in place to ensure the optimization is implemented correctly?
- Is your optimization based on performance data?

Delivery Strategy

- How frequently do you make updates for each channel?
- Are you able to influence feed updates/delivery and set a frequency that meets your needs?
- How quickly do channels register your changes? Does it take a full day or less than an hour?

New Feed Generation

- How fast are you able to launch a new channel?
- What's holding you back? Is it product data, resources or processes?

Feed Failure Discovery

- Does your existing setup enable you to be proactive rather than reactive to errors?
- Are you able to easily discover errors, or does it take you more than a day to discover them?

How well you're able to optimize, map and deliver your product data feeds to leading channels and other custom destinations will ultimately determine your long-term success.

Feed Management Maturity Model

Data			
Capability	Basic	Advanced	Best in Class
Optimization capabilities	No optimization on product data or product selection	Basic transformation such as find/replace, concatenate, etc.	Optimization automated and taking place regularly
Data source	Scraping the website or exporting from PIM	Supplying additional category data	Central inventory for all product data sources
Failure rate on products submitted	> 10%	> 10%	> 1%

Strategies			
Capability	Basic	Advanced	Best in Class
A / B testing	None	Manual	Testing images, titles, etc.
Strategy	Manual delivery	Able to generate and send a product feed daily	Leverage API for frequent updates

Resources			
Capability	Basic	Advanced	Best in Class
Ability to generate test feeds in sandbox environment	No	Yes	Yes
Team / Technology	IT Team handles feeds among other important tasks	Using 3rd-party tool or a custom built integration to syndicate the data	Leveraging API for frequent updates
Feed generation for a new channel	> 3 weeks	Within 2 weeks	< 3 days
Feed failure discovery	None	Manual checks	Automated alerts in place for feed failures

Understand Common Pitfalls of Feed Management

At Rithum, our teams assess feeds for hundreds of prospective brands and retailers each month. Through this process, we see many of the same issues. These pitfalls are common across verticals and, while some have to do with the resources and expertise available to these companies, others emerge from a siloed approach to data syndication. Unfortunately, they can result in poor performance and low engagement for your products on some of the most prominent advertising channels.

Settling versus optimizing

Regardless of the channel, product feed visibility is typically correlated with three key aspects:

- Sufficient budget allocation
- Proper bidding
- Optimized product data

But just because your products have all the required attributes and your feeds are approved doesn't mean you're getting the most out of your data. We often see examples where significant work is needed to complete all the required attributes in the proper format. Yet, the full catalog (or majority of it) has been approved on the targeted channels. Other times, falling short is just due to poor communication or a gap in understanding how the advertising channel works.

TIP

Check the channel's performance tab when testing product visibility. If you're allocating enough budget and bidding in line with the platform's recommendations, check how many products received more than 1,000 impressions in the last 30 days. **If they aren't showing up, that's a good indicator you have more work to do.**

At Rithum, the optimization mindset is deeply ingrained within our teams, so feeds continually undergo iterations and improvement over time. We assess and optimize feeds regularly so you're not missing out on any opportunities.

Creating titles based on a structure (and forgetting about it)

Generating titles using a rules-based structure is good. But you can't "set it and forget it." Not all products are created equal. Titles must evolve and reflect performance. But it's difficult to assess on a granular level without the proper tools and resources.

When working within a structure, it's best to drill at least one level deeper and create a dedicated structure of your titles by category. If you feel adventurous, dig another level deeper and structure them by sub-category or product type.

We recommend A/B testing the order of the attributes you use to create the title. Periodically check your search terms and enhance titles with those that convert at the highest rate.

Using your Google Shopping feed for everything

While managing multiple destinations and connections can get complex, we don't recommend using your Google Ads feed for other channels. This could lead to errors and low product visibility. Loading your titles and descriptions with keywords might be important for optimization on some channels, but for others (e.g., Instagram), lifestyle imagery is best to entice users to click.

[Find a suitable partner or platform](#) to help you overcome these channel variations, and ensure your feeds are optimized and compliant for each individual channel.

Not showcasing discounts or promotions

Showcasing discounts and promotions leads to higher engagement with product ads. This can translate into higher, more relevant traffic for your products on Google Shopping, display ads and social ads. A strong clickthrough rate (CTR) can lead to improved cost-per-click (CPC) rates, as channels perceive that the ad is relevant.

Example Title Structures to Start With

Apparel

Brand + Gender + Product
Type + Attributes

Consumables

Brand + Product Type +
Attributes

Heavy Goods

Brand + Product + Attributes

Electronics

Brand + Attributes + Product
Type + Model #

Seasonal

Occasion + Product Type +
Attributes

Lacking mutual understanding between feed management and advertising teams

Lack of collaboration between your advertising and data syndication teams can cost you. Isolated processes between the two can result in delays, out of stock or 404 messages and lack of optimisation to reach your full potential. Instead, break down silos by:

- Investing in training for both teams to improve collaboration, understanding and processes
- Identifying a partner to work as an extension of your data feed team alongside advertising
- Implementing software to manage both under the same roof

Not having an automated delivery strategy

You might think automation doesn't apply to you if your inventory doesn't change very often. While you might be a bit safer than those who have higher inventory turnover, unfortunate (and costly) situations could still occur. This might include low or out of stock inventory, odd sizes and assortments or broken URLs.

Feed delivery automation allows for ultimate agility in a competitive space like digital advertising. Plus, when feed delivery is automated, it's also less likely to include errors. Automation through integrations or a dedicated feed management solution removes the hassle so you can focus on strategy instead.

Most importantly, keep a close eye on how your teams perform, how agile your strategy is and how your data evolves. While there are plenty more product feed pitfalls your team could undergo, managing these common mistakes will keep you ahead of the game.



How to Audit Product Data

Assessing and optimizing your feeds and product data is possible — even without a technical background. The more you audit and modify your processes, the more manageable (and higher performing) they'll become.

Start with the basics

First, assess four important aspects of basic feed management:

- **Requirements.** Create a document with each channel's required, recommended and optional data points.
- **The actual feeds.** Download your active feeds and check them against the requirements.
- **Your data sources.** Assess the places where your data resides to better understand what's missing in your live feeds and what you can cover with the internal data you already have. Then, close any gaps.
- **Delivery strategy.** Check the frequency of your feed updates among internal systems and channel dashboards. It's also important to understand how the data is actually delivered (e.g., through a dedicated solution, manual upload, etc.).

Perform a quantitative analysis of your product data

Assess each product to identify and correct missing data requirements. Which are optional and which are required?

Then, assess performance by filtering the channel's advertising interface for products with low impressions. For example, how many products have fewer than 1,000 impressions in the last 15 days? Products with low impressions are not visible, so try to understand if they were disapproved or missing key data points.

TIP

If you're assessing products on Google Shopping, you can even extract how many products are below a certain impression share. This way, you can understand how many products aren't sufficiently covering impressions.

Perform a qualitative analysis of your product data

A quantitative analysis for all of your products might be too time-consuming. It's best to start with your top sellers or focus products.

- Download a search query report for select products and keep only the top-converting search queries. Are these top search terms included in your titles or other data points for the search engines you target?
- Which products have a high volume of impressions, but a low click-through rate (CTR)? Look at these metrics to understand why visible products aren't engaging users to click through. You can also assess which products drive traffic, but not sales.
- Are you sending more than two images for your social feeds?
- Are you using custom labels? If so, what are they based on — attributes and/or performance data? Do they help structure your campaigns based on goals, intent and performance?
- Examine your categories and product types. Are they accurate? Can they be more granular?

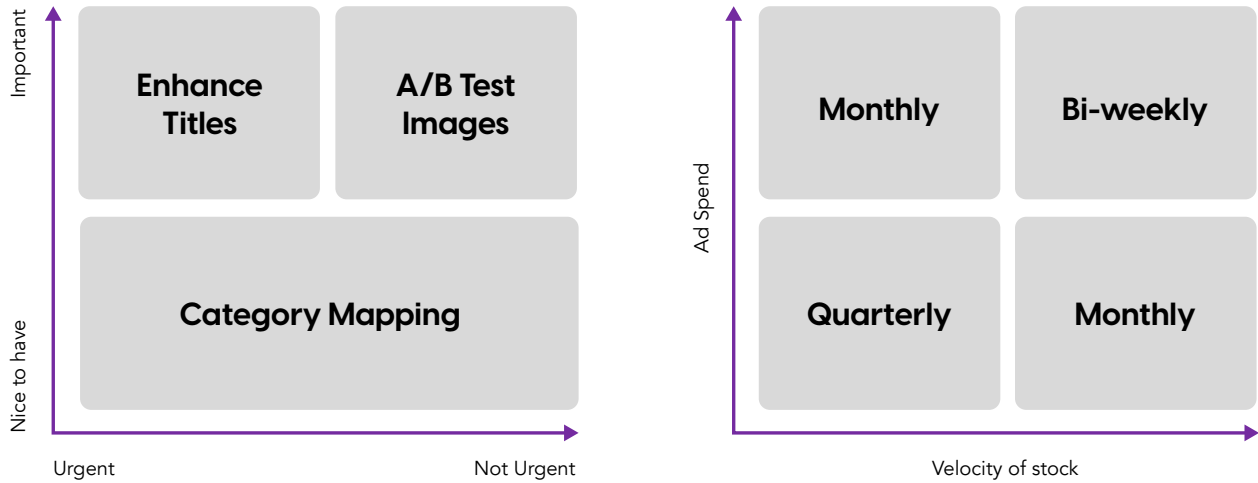
Document your conclusions

Document all conclusions and set clear follow-up actions and responsibilities. This will help you prioritize and share them across the organization with relevant stakeholders. Then, split action items by urgency level and leave lower priority items for later. Just remember to address non-urgent tasks before they become urgent.



Follow up periodically

Follow-up is everything, so run this process regularly. The frequency depends on your ad spend and how fast your stock changes:



While this is only a guideline, the more you spend, the more data will come your way to help you make decisions in optimizing product data.

TAKE THE HASSLE OUT OF FEED MANAGEMENT

Rithum transforms your data to meet the unique requirements of every channel.

Connect and optimize the world's commerce

Rithum is a leading provider of cloud-based e-commerce solutions that enable retailers and branded manufacturers to integrate, manage and optimize their merchandise sales across hundreds of online channels, including Facebook, Google, Amazon, eBay, Walmart and more.

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