

**VIA MEDICI**  
Product Communication

2018 European Product Information Management for  
Manufacturing Product Leadership Award



2018  
**BEST PRACTICES**  
AWARDS

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## Background and Company Performance

### *Industry Challenges*

Manufacturing companies have large product portfolios ranging from thousands to even millions of products that have a significant number of variants. Product attributes for just one product can be quite numerous, and the international nature of sales leads to many languages being communicated. As such, product portfolios and data structures can be highly complex. Complexity in maintaining and administering product data and its marketing information and media assets increases along with the number of products, languages, attributes, and product variants. Managing the complexity of both historical and new data, making sense of it all, and translating it into critical business decisions is challenging.

In many cases, Frost & Sullivan points out that manufacturing organizations do not have a comprehensive product information management (PIM) solution to address this complexity. They rely on isolated teams. For example, engineering, testing, and quality assurance collect available data to describe products, and marketing creates product descriptions, marketing tags, pictures, videos, and sales to develop comparisons to competing products. Frost & Sullivan views this methodology as unstructured and labor intensive. Existing PIM solutions used by manufacturing companies do not suffice, because they lack easy integration, may not be vertically focused, or do not provide comprehensive process coverage. Frost & Sullivan believes that proper Industry 4.0 strategy, omni-channel commerce, internationalization, and digital transformation through Internet of Things (IoT) call for a comprehensive PIM solution.

Frost & Sullivan expects software vendors that can offer a comprehensive and central platform that will help today's manufacturing companies maintain control of enterprise-wide product data throughout the entire process chain and address the aforementioned challenges to secure leadership positions in the market.

### *Product Family Attributes and Business Impact*

#### **Match to Needs**

Strongly committed to maximizing its value proposition to its customers, Viamedici offers the enterprise product information management suite, Viamedici EPIM. Viamedici EPIM effectively matches the industry needs through a unique combination of PIM, media asset management, channel management, multi-language management, online and print tools. The solution also incorporates product master data management, total quality management, and data governance; all this makes it a comprehensive solution that can cover all product management and product marketing processes. This product allows Viamedici to support its customers in efficiently managing and communicating their product information with just one platform.

Flexible import interfaces, easy-to-use data administration, and tools to consolidate and

synchronize all product data make Viamedici EPIM quite suitable for product data management. Simple integration is one of the areas the company pays significant attention to and has invested in heavily. Viamedici provides certified integrations to the leading software vendors. A Web service interface addresses most of the product functions directly. On the other hand, a database application programming interface (API) provides easy access to all of the data, without the need to understand complex scenarios and data models. Manufacturing companies deal with many different products - from sensors, hydraulic cylinders, and drilling machines, to office chairs. As such, keeping in mind that a flexible concept for configuring the data structure and how to manage the data is necessary, Viamedici EPIM is based on meta-model concept (a highly flexible data model) that allows its customers to define the model they need for their business and reproduce even the most complex product structures. This concept supports the management of data from other domains like suppliers or customers as well.

Viamedici EPIM facilitates simple maintenance and administration also of marketing information and media assets, such as image, graphic, and document formats and audio and video files, through its integrated media asset management module. Print tools, in a highly automated way, allow for the creation of materials including product marketing collateral, price lists, and catalogs.

When operating globally, manufacturing companies deal with a broad, diverse, and complex set of value chain partners. To this end, EPIM's built-in internationalization capabilities support global operations by harmonizing global processes. The platform features multi-language management solutions for translation and language management, so that manufacturers can now have their product data under control in all languages. In addition, an integrated dictionary enables Viamedici's customers to consistently manage company-specific terminology.

EPIM creates consistent, end-to-end user experiences. EPIM has an integrated publication and channel management module in which data can be targeted for supply to print, online, and mobile applications. Manufacturers can effectively communicate with a customer's preferred channel, delivering personalized, end-to-end customer experiences across all channels and devices, including Web, mobile, social, email, market places, and point of sale. Therefore, Viamedici's customers have approved, quality-assured product data immediately available to anyone internal or external to the organization.

Frost & Sullivan independent analysis confirms that other competing PIM solutions lack the wide-ranging functionalities mentioned above; thus, Frost & Sullivan feels that the comprehensive nature of EPIM makes it superior to point solutions offered by competitors. Viamedici covers all product management and marketing processes, provides off-the-shelf software that is vertically focused for manufacturing, and integrates easily. As a result, Viamedici's customers, using just one platform, can focus on the strategic activities (i.e., managing and communicating their product information) that align with their corporate goals and stay ahead in their growth curve - rather than having to manage multi-vendor, stand-alone point solutions, or rely on isolated teams that are time-consuming, labor

intensive, complex, and expensive. Frost & Sullivan applauds Viamedici for offering an end-to-end, central platform that covers all product information management and marketing processes.

### **Positioning & Design**

With the aim to provide an enriched user experience, Viamedici EPIM is designed as fully Web-based, highly configurable software with a J2EE backend and an HTML5 front end. It makes extensive use of in-memory features. Chief among the highlights is the platform's scalable multi-daemon architecture, in which different services provided by EPIM are managed by daemon, and every daemon can run in parallel for scalability and multi-tasking.

Data structures, especially marketing and sales processes, always change as companies add additional product portfolio, acquire other companies that must be integrated quickly, or sell parts of their business. What largely differentiates EPIM is that it is designed as completely off-the-shelf software - its customers can flexibly make necessary adjustments to suit their business requirements, without any additional programming. No individualization in terms of programming and highly configurable software that can be flexibly adjusted to customer requirements mean lower total cost of ownership (TCO). Powerful API, Web services, and certified high-quality interfaces not only facilitate a seamless coordination, connectivity, and integration to an existing infrastructure and the different business applications that its customers have been running on their business processes, but also enable a shorter implementation time with minimal maintenance. TÜV-certified quality assurance process results in the highest quality standards and investment security.

EPIM is always up-to-date, and all customers have exactly the same version of the software. The company has moved from a fixed release strategy to a continuous implementation and delivery model with regular updates. This avoids migration efforts and costs and best supports customers' fast-to-market requirements. Viamedici operates its own powerful and highly dynamic cloud center - the Viamedici EPIM Cloud Center. The company also provides its solution in cooperation with AWS and Azure cloud platforms. Frost & Sullivan believes that the inclusion of these unique design attributes is set to help Viamedici increase further adoption of its platform.

One of the distinct features of Viamedici as a company is its comprehensiveness. The company also offers Viamedici ECAT and Viamedici ECOM, which are nice-to-have add-ons that were developed to offer immediate additional benefits to its customers. ECAT allows a quick and easy creation of electronic product catalogs for exchange between customers and business partners. All solutions directly integrate. Viamedici's solution is also used as an enabling technology for eCommerce, and ECOM is its eCommerce solution. While Viamedici's customers use its ECOM solution, Viamedici interfaces with other leading eCommerce systems (SAP Hybris, Intershop, Magento, Oxid eSales and others) to support customers that have already invested in establishing a new eCommerce infrastructure.

As a result, Frost & Sullivan firmly believes that Viamedici's uniqueness in product leadership delivers high-quality product data management and superior omni-channel management functionality for any eCommerce strategy, as well as solutions for electronic data exchange.

### **Customer Acquisition & Financial Performance**

As one of the leading vendors of software and cloud solutions for PIM, product master data management (MDM), and B2B-Commerce, Viamedici has approximately 200 customers and 25,000 users. Ninety percent of its customers are from the manufacturing industry. Companies find Viamedici's industry-proven solutions quite appealing, as they are manufacturing-vertical focused. One of the primary factors contributing to the company's success is its highly efficient resource pool (130 employees) with manufacturing industry expertise and understanding of every aspect of the customer's business, manufacturing processes, and requirements. Some of its customers include Kärcher, Trumpf, Bosch, Rittal, and Knauf. Knauf, for instance, has tens of thousands of products in 22 languages. Viamedici helps the company manage all of its products and related customer and supplier data and creates all the print materials and the marketing collateral, such as catalogs, price lists, product data sheets, technical information and material, and online product catalogs. Frost & Sullivan feels that the ability of Viamedici's comprehensive EPIM suite to conveniently maintain and administer companywide product data, marketing information, and media assets in all languages using just one central platform makes it attractive to customers.

With regards to expansion into more target accounts, Viamedici works in concert with an international network of consulting and implementation partners. The company has a business development and partnership strategy that hinges on close working relationships with technology partners, including Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and Adobe, and implementation partners such as Abilex, Advellence and Westinfosoft. Most of the projects are implemented by its implementation partners. With such a robust portfolio of customers, technology partners, and integration partners (which the company continuously expands), Viamedici is expected to further strengthen its position in the European market.

Headquartered in Germany, Viamedici has offices in Bern, Iasi, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. The company's average revenue growth is 15% per year, and, in 2016 and 2017, its growth rate was around 25%. Seventy percent of its revenues come from Europe, and thirty percent are generated in Asia and North America. From a business outlook perspective, Viamedici plans to drive its international expansion by increasing its global partner network and extending its partner support centers. From a product strategy perspective, Viamedici is continuing to build new functionality – such as extending marketing and omni-channel features, analytics and monitoring functionality, collaboration and social features, and artificial intelligence. Through a recent acquisition, Viamedici extended its solution in the areas of product configuration, rule management and CPQ to provide better support for increasingly customizable product portfolios with significant amounts of product variants. Overall, a strong product and business strategy

will likely boost Viamedici's performance and growth potential.

## *Conclusion*

*Today's manufacturing companies that have huge and increasingly complex product portfolios need a comprehensive, centralized software platform that will help them cover all product management and product marketing processes.*

*Frost & Sullivan's ongoing research concludes that Viamedici EPIM successfully addresses this need. The platform delivers unmatched product customer value through PIM, media asset management, channel management, multi-language management, online and print. Viamedici has gained a distinct competitive edge by solving another critical challenge faced by manufacturing companies — their reliance on point solutions and isolated teams that are time-consuming, labor intensive, complex, and expensive to manage.*

*With Viamedici's comprehensive solution, manufacturing companies can now have their massive volumes of product data under control throughout the entire process chain. Designed as completely off-the-shelf software, Viamedici has clearly enhanced the value proposition for its customers, as they can make the necessary adjustments to suit their business requirements – all without any additional programming. In addition, a powerful eCommerce platform (ECOM) and solutions for electronic data exchange (ECAT) further fortify Viamedici's market positioning.*

*With its strong overall performance, Viamedici has earned the 2018 Frost & Sullivan Product Leadership Award.*

## Significance of Product Leadership

Ultimately, growth in any organization depends upon customers purchasing from a company and then making the decision to return time and again. A comprehensive product line, filled with high-quality, value-driven options, is the key to building an engaged customer base. To achieve and maintain product excellence, an organization must strive to be best-in-class in three key areas: understanding demand, nurturing the brand, and differentiating from the competition.



## Understanding Product Leadership

Demand forecasting, branding, and differentiating all play a critical role in finding growth opportunities for a superior product line. This three-fold focus, however, must be complemented by an equally rigorous focus on pursuing those opportunities to a best-in-class standard. Customer communications, customer feedback, pricing, and competitor actions must all be managed and monitored for ongoing success. If an organization can successfully parlay product excellence into positive business impact, increased market share will inevitably follow over time.

## Key Benchmarking Criteria

For the Product Leadership Award, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated two key factors—Product Family Attributes and Business Impact—according to the criteria identified below.

### Product Family Attributes

- Criterion 1: Match to Needs
- Criterion 2: Reliability and Quality
- Criterion 3: Product/Service Value
- Criterion 4: Positioning
- Criterion 5: Design

### Business Impact

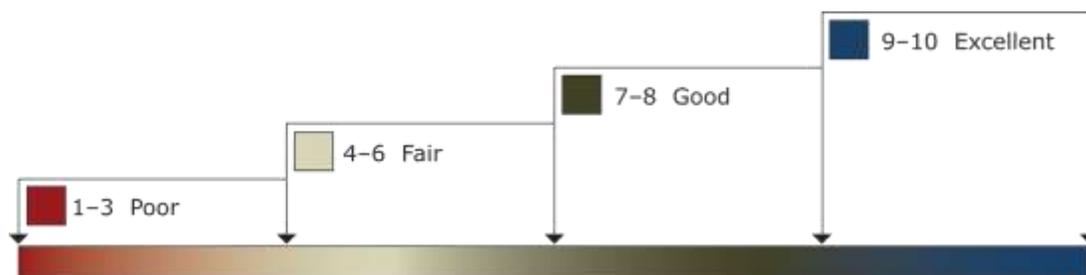
- Criterion 1: Financial Performance
- Criterion 2: Customer Acquisition
- Criterion 3: Operational Efficiency
- Criterion 4: Growth Potential
- Criterion 5: Human Capital

## Best Practices Award Analysis for Viamedici

### Decision Support Scorecard

To support its evaluation of best practices across multiple business performance categories, Frost & Sullivan employs a customized Decision Support Scorecard. This tool allows our research and consulting teams to objectively analyze performance, according to the key benchmarking criteria listed in the previous section, and to assign ratings on that basis. The tool follows a 10-point scale that allows for nuances in performance evaluation. Ratings guidelines are illustrated below.

#### RATINGS GUIDELINES



The Decision Support Scorecard is organized by Product Family Attributes and Business Impact (i.e., These are the overarching categories for all 10 benchmarking criteria; the definitions for each criterion are provided beneath the scorecard.). The research team confirms the veracity of this weighted scorecard through sensitivity analysis, which confirms that small changes to the ratings for a specific criterion do not lead to a significant change in the overall relative rankings of the companies.

The results of this analysis are shown below. To remain unbiased and to protect the interests of all organizations reviewed, we have chosen to refer to the other key participants as Competitor 2 and Competitor 3.

<i>Measurement of 1-10 (1 = poor; 10 = excellent)</i>			
<b>Product Leadership</b>	Product Family Attributes	Business Impact	Average Rating
<b>Viamedici</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>
Competitor 2	7.5	8.5	8.0
Competitor 3	7.0	7.0	7.0

### *Product Family Attributes*

#### **Criterion 1: Match to Needs**

Requirement: Customer needs directly influence and inspire the design and positioning of the product family.

#### **Criterion 2: Reliability and Quality**

Requirement: Products consistently meet or exceed customer expectations for performance and length of service.

#### **Criterion 3: Product/Service Value**

Requirement: Products or services offer the best value for the price, compared to similar offerings in the market.

#### **Criterion 4: Positioning**

Requirement: Products or services address unique, unmet need that competitors cannot easily replicate or replace.

#### **Criterion 5: Design**

Requirement: The product features an innovative design, enhancing both visual appeal and ease of use.

### *Business Impact*

#### **Criterion 1: Financial Performance**

Requirement: Overall financial performance is strong in terms of revenues, revenue growth, operating margin, and other key financial metrics.

#### **Criterion 2: Customer Acquisition**

Requirement: Product strength enables acquisition of new customers, even as it enhances retention of current customers.

#### **Criterion 3: Operational Efficiency**

Requirement: Staff is able to perform assigned tasks productively, quickly, and to a high quality standard.

**Criterion 4: Growth Potential**

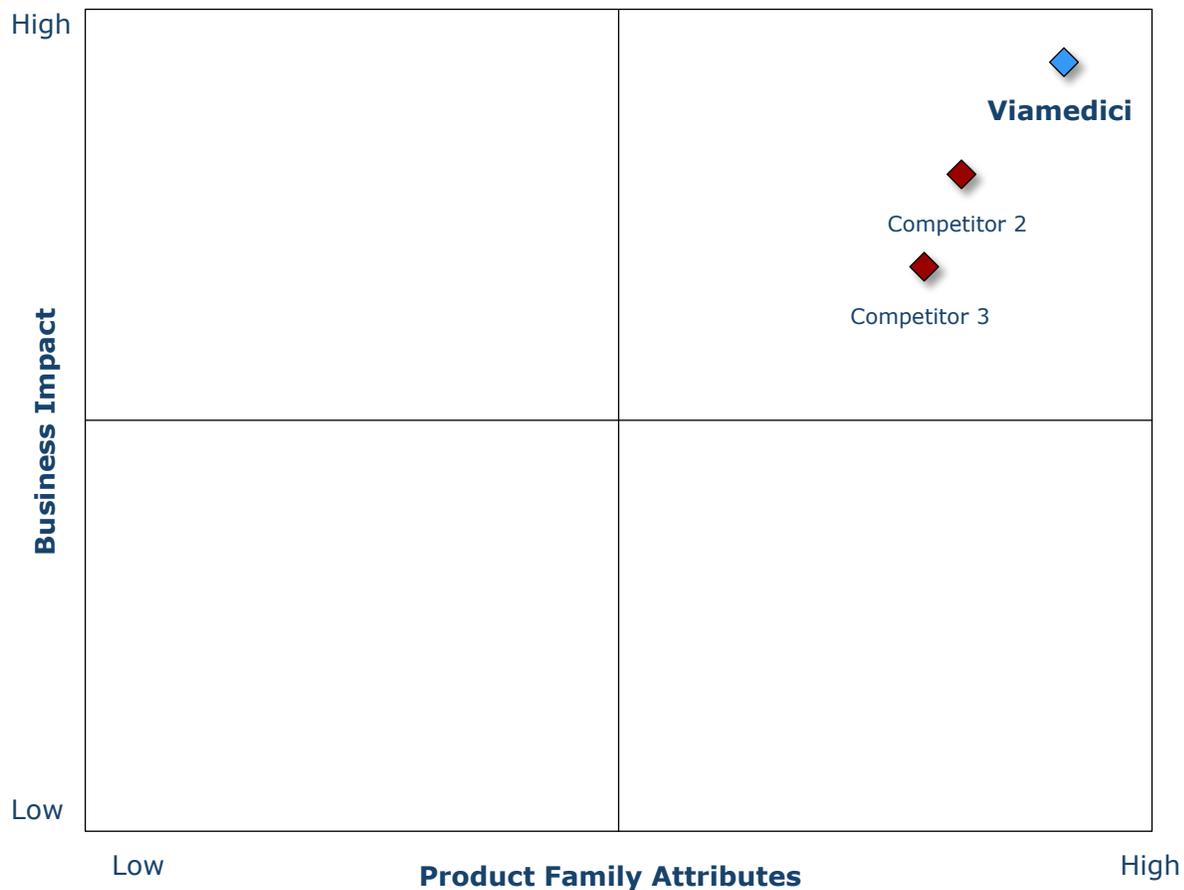
Requirements: Product quality strengthens brand, reinforces customer loyalty, and enhances growth potential.

**Criterion 5: Human Capital**

Requirement: Company culture is characterized by a strong commitment to product quality and customer impact, which in turn enhances employee morale and retention.

*Decision Support Matrix*

Once all companies have been evaluated according to the Decision Support Scorecard, analysts then position the candidates on the matrix shown below, enabling them to visualize which companies are truly breakthrough and which ones are not yet operating at best-in-class levels.



## Best Practices Recognition: 10 Steps to Researching, Identifying, and Recognizing Best Practices

Frost & Sullivan analysts follow a 10-step process to evaluate Award candidates and assess their fit with select best practice criteria. The reputation and integrity of the Awards are based on close adherence to this process.

STEP	OBJECTIVE	KEY ACTIVITIES	OUTPUT
1 <b>Monitor, target, and screen</b>	Identify Award recipient candidates from around the globe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct in-depth industry research</li> <li>• Identify emerging sectors</li> <li>• Scan multiple geographies</li> </ul>	Pipeline of candidates who potentially meet all best-practice criteria
2 <b>Perform 360-degree research</b>	Perform comprehensive, 360-degree research on all candidates in the pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview thought leaders and industry practitioners</li> <li>• Assess candidates' fit with best-practice criteria</li> <li>• Rank all candidates</li> </ul>	Matrix positioning of all candidates' performance relative to one another
3 <b>Invite thought leadership in best practices</b>	Perform in-depth examination of all candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm best-practice criteria</li> <li>• Examine eligibility of all candidates</li> <li>• Identify any information gaps</li> </ul>	Detailed profiles of all ranked candidates
4 <b>Initiate research director review</b>	Conduct an unbiased evaluation of all candidate profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm ranking options</li> <li>• Invite multiple perspectives on candidates' performance</li> <li>• Update candidate profiles</li> </ul>	Final prioritization of all eligible candidates and companion best-practice positioning paper
5 <b>Assemble panel of industry experts</b>	Present findings to an expert panel of industry thought leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share findings</li> <li>• Strengthen cases for candidate eligibility</li> <li>• Prioritize candidates</li> </ul>	Refined list of prioritized Award candidates
6 <b>Conduct global industry review</b>	Build consensus on Award candidates' eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold global team meeting to review all candidates</li> <li>• Pressure-test fit with criteria</li> <li>• Confirm inclusion of all eligible candidates</li> </ul>	Final list of eligible Award candidates, representing success stories worldwide
7 <b>Perform quality check</b>	Develop official Award consideration materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform final performance benchmarking activities</li> <li>• Write nominations</li> <li>• Perform quality review</li> </ul>	High-quality, accurate, and creative presentation of nominees' successes
8 <b>Reconnect with panel of industry experts</b>	Finalize the selection of the best-practice Award recipient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review analysis with panel</li> <li>• Build consensus</li> <li>• Select recipient</li> </ul>	Decision on which company performs best against all best-practice criteria
9 <b>Communicate recognition</b>	Inform Award recipient of Award recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present Award to the CEO</li> <li>• Inspire the organization for continued success</li> <li>• Celebrate the recipient's performance</li> </ul>	Announcement of Award and plan for how recipient can use the Award to enhance the brand
10 <b>Take strategic action</b>	Upon licensing, company is able to share Award news with stakeholders and customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate media outreach</li> <li>• Design a marketing plan</li> <li>• Assess Award's role in future strategic planning</li> </ul>	Widespread awareness of recipient's Award status among investors, media personnel, and employees

## The Intersection between 360-Degree Research and Best Practices Awards

### Research Methodology

Frost & Sullivan's 360-degree research methodology represents the analytical rigor of our research process. It offers a 360-degree-view of industry challenges, trends, and issues by integrating all 7 of Frost & Sullivan's research methodologies. Too often companies make important growth decisions based on a narrow understanding of their environment, leading to errors of both omission and commission. Successful growth strategies are founded on a thorough understanding of market, technical, economic, financial, customer, best practices, and demographic analyses. The integration of these research disciplines into the 360-degree research methodology provides an evaluation platform for benchmarking industry participants and for identifying those performing at best-in-class levels.

### 360-DEGREE RESEARCH: SEEING ORDER IN THE CHAOS



## About Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan, the Growth Partnership Company, enables clients to accelerate growth and achieve best-in-class positions in growth, innovation and leadership. The company's Growth Partnership Service provides the CEO and the CEO's Growth Team with disciplined research and best practice models to drive the generation, evaluation, and implementation of powerful growth strategies. Frost & Sullivan leverages more than 50 years of experience in partnering with Global 1000 companies, emerging businesses, and the investment community from 45 offices on six continents. To join our Growth Partnership, please visit <http://www.frost.com>.